

THE BOOK OF JOB

AN INSPIRED DRAMA

5

REVEALING THE NECESSITY
FOR SUFFERING, THE
EFFECT OF SUFFERING,
AND THE PHILOSOPHY
OF THE IMPOSITION OF
HUMAN SUFFERING

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PREFACE.

In 1892 the writer issued a small volume for private circulation. In it were promised additional writings developing the same general line of thought in a more matured form. That promise was not an idle one, and there has never been a day since it was made that it has not been the purpose of the writer to fulfill it. The delay has been because of the keen appreciation of the fact that each year was the better preparing him for the duty imposed upon, and thus publicly assumed by, him. The present seems to be an opportune time to give to those who may enjoy the reading of it the following paper, which is fairly complete within itself, upon the subjects as outlined upon the title page. The overwhelming sense of duty which compelled the publication of the preliminary book referred to remains unchanged. In submitting to it I can be happy. In resisting it I can not be other than depressed and miserable. I feel that the experiences of more than thirty years' duration, and the convictions which have remained unchanged for more than fifteen years, must govern me. I cannot safely act upon the advice of anyone, hence it is useless

to seek it. My own sense of duty must be my only guide, and upon it alone I act. If there be error in the act, it is my own error. If there is error in the thoughts presented and you accept it, it is your error and not mine. That which I have received and accepted, I give. That which I may have received, and have not accepted, I do not give. I hold it in abeyance, awaiting settled conviction and judgment. The truths which you will find in this book are not new truths. They may be new to you in form of expression or in the breadth of meaning given them. It lies with each for himself to determine how far he may go in accepting them in the form in which they are declared. This is a matter of indifference to me, for my whole duty ends in the presentation of them as found in the following pages. When I shall see my way clearly in reference thereto I shall follow these truths with others of the same nature which have come, or shall come to me, accompanied with a settled conviction on my own part as to their value for limited or general publication.

I. N. MAST.

Ottumwa, Iowa, January, 1904.

CHAPTER I.

TRUTH AND THE METHOD OF ITS DISCOVERY.

Truth has existed from the beginning of time, yea, from the beginning of all existence. Truth is eternal, as God is eternal; but truth must be discovered. It does not come to us without effort; it can not come to us without effort. The effort which is required to acquire it is confined to no age, no country, no people. It belongs to all ages, all countries, all peoples. The Book of Job is one of the clearest evidences of this assertion that can be produced. Unknown as to the age which gave it birth, the country from which it came, or the author who gave expression to it, it stands as a monument marking the course of divine revelation to the human race. The mind which could conceive and accept the truths contained in it was no ordinary mind. The intellect which discovered them to mankind was an aided intellect. In this lies the proof that they were inspired. Inspiration is aided human intellect; aided human spiritual comprehension; aided human expression of conceived and accepted truth. This is all that there is of inspiration. This is all that inspiration can be. God according to his own purpose leads a human soul into a conception of truth, then into the acceptance of such truth, then into the expression and recording of such truth. When this has been done such truth is both divinely inspired and revealed. It lies beyond the reach of

man certain truths and the reasons for them, as we have above set forth, and he purposed to do it through the life and character of Job as a means thereto. The life and the character of Job must therefore be perfected as the means to be used for this end. In this lies the necessity for the affliction endured by Job and which came from the hand of God direct. Without such affliction Job could never have been prepared to receive that revelation of truth which came to him and which has been revealed through him for the benefit of all subsequent ages.

If these assertions are true, then it follows that in human life some individuals are tempted, not of their own human nature and desires, but of God himself. Such temptation can only come to a soul as a preparation for some duty imposed upon it individually, and separate and distinct from those duties common to all the human race. If this be accepted as truth, then it follows that God does impose upon individuals duties not common to all, responsibilities unknown to all others, and does lead such individuals into a comprehension of spiritual truth otherwise unattainable during human life. The instances of this stand out prominently in the record of the revelation of spiritual truth, which has come down to us. Such is God's method. Such is God's purpose.

2nd. The next thought is that some preparation is necessary before any soul can travel out beyond the boundary of the ordinary spiritual comprehension of truth, common to all. If it had not been for such special preparation in individual cases the com-

prehension of spiritual truth would have reached a fixed limit and would have remained stationary thereat throughout time; or rather would have receded therefrom as the intellectual powers of the race had developed and had thereby blunted spiritual conception. To overcome such retrogression and to lead the human race ever to a broader and fuller comprehension of spiritual truth, God has bestowed upon individuals spiritual genius, which is neither more nor less than an abnormal development of one or more spiritual powers or faculties in a person appointed of the purpose of God for such ends and prepared of God for such duties. Such preparation is as essential to the comprehension of spiritual truth as is a special preparation necessary for the comprehension of physical truth. The difference is that the latter may come of our own will and effort, while the former can only come from God direct according to his own purpose, and wholly without the power of human will and purpose.

3rd. Such appointed soul must assume and bear responsibilities that no other assumes or bears. This is inevitable because of the power of spiritual comprehension thus bestowed upon it. To fail to use such power when once it is bestowed is in itself sin, and would sink such soul into spiritual death from the instant of such choice. Life is bestowed upon us all for a purpose. Life is not our own to do as we will with it. It is ours to fulfill the purpose of its creation, and if we, knowing such purpose, refuse to fulfill it, we commit sin and sink our souls into spiritual death through such refusal. Thus I

may not by my own will and act take my own life out of this human existence without sin, any more than I may take the life of another out of this existence without sin. It is our duty, one and all, to bear the burdens which rest upon us here, whether they be great or small, until such time as God's will releases us from our human state.

4th. Such special responsibilities must be forced upon the soul against its will. If they were not, it might glory in them, which it may not do. Whatever of glory, or honor or praise there may be in them belongs to God who placed them and not to the soul which bears them. Job did not seek his affliction or that knowledge which came to him and which was bestowed upon the world through him, as the result of such preparation. He was humbled before his God and remained so to the end of his life.

5th. The yielding soul thus burdened with responsibility enters into covenant relations with God. Such covenant is in effect throughout its human existence and cannot be disregarded. What the terms of covenant are may be unknown to all except to the one who enters into it, but to such one there is never doubt. No one who earnestly seeks to know God's will can remain in doubt as to what such will is.

The second great truth which is revealed to the world through the book of Job is this: That suffering constitutes a necessary preparation for the soul's highest enjoyment of all that God has bestowed upon it. Is this a truth? Can it be demonstrated? Yes, it is both a truth and it can be made clear unto many.

It cannot be demonstrated to all. It is kindred to the truth that evil is necessary in order that good may exist; that a knowledge of evil is necessary in order that a knowledge of good may be possessed; that it is darkness that renders light visible; that it is discord that reveals harmony; that it is mental and physical suffering that make us conscious of health. The same truth applies to all knowledge which we possess and which rests upon individual experience. As all spiritual knowledge rests upon individual experience, the foregoing declaration must apply to all spiritual truths. Every positive state or condition presupposes a negative or opposite state or condition. Every positive and fixed relation in life presupposes a negative or opposite relation. Life and all that life contains is measured by one common unit of measurement. That unit of measurement constitutes the difference between the positive and the negative of all that appertains to life, as determined by the individual experience of the soul. To know good the soul must first know evil, and it measures its own goodness and the joy it experiences therefrom by its degree of removal from the evil and the sorrow which it brought, according to its former experience. Is this saying that every soul must sin before it can enter heaven? It is not, but it is saying that every soul must either experience in itself the bitterness of sin, or the negative condition of that intermediate state into which it was born, before it can be conscious of the positive state of obedience and heaven. Heaven is more to the redeemed sinner than it can ever be to

the soul which never knew sin positively through actual transgression, but only negatively through its existence in the intermediate state. Unrepented sin damns the soul forever. Repented and pardoned sin intensifies the joys of the soul in heaven forever, because its unit of measurement based upon its individual experience, and by which it measures its own joy, embraces more degrees of difference between its two states, than can that of the other soul. Sin is therefore both a blessing and a curse; a blessing to the repentant and forgiven sinner, a curse to all who fail to repent. Job was led through the depths of mental and physical suffering in order that he might rise to otherwise unattainable heights of joy.

If these declarations are truth, then why do not all suffer even as Job suffered? Why do not all sin and sin outrageously? The answer to both these questions is this: God's will and purpose assigns to each soul a definite and fixed course throughout both time and eternity. The soul is powerless to vary from that course by even a hairsbreadth, and yet its every thought and word and act is free, absolutely free. That divine purpose requires the life of every soul that is born on earth, some to attain the highest possible joy, some to suffer the greatest possible sorrow, but in no case can the joy or the sorrow be without or beyond that infinite purpose. Such infinite purpose is formed in infinite love, governed by infinite power, and limited by infinite wisdom. It concerns the ultimate and everlasting happiness of all God's creatures, both human and super-human,

both now in existence and hereafter to be created. Shall we, as units in an eternity of manifested life, question the power that brought us into being and purposed that we should suffer or enjoy? Let us rather thank God for what we suffer and for what we enjoy, knowing that infinite love compels it all.

CHAPTER II.

THE GIFT OF LIFE.

Should man ever condemn his Creator for the gift of life? It would seem that if this could ever be proper it would have been justifiable on the part of the allegorical personage, Job. The lesson taught is that it is never justifiable. Job is represented as a human creature living to fulfill a divine purpose, suffering all that humanity can suffer, and himself regretting that to him had been given life in its human state. The lament of Job recognizes and reveals the truth which we have before declared, that the only possible entrance into spiritual existence is through human existence, but such human existence may be of the shortest duration and wholly unconscious. Job would have died at human birth and would have entered into spiritual existence through the door of human death. Job does not reproach God for bestowing upon him existence, but only for giving to him the human phase of existence beyond that necessary to usher him into the spiritual phase of it.

This requires us to take up the truths of life, death, and the after-life, as these are presented by Job and to declare the revelation which is thus declared through him. This we will attempt to do under the following heads:

1st. What is life?

2nd. How is it bestowed upon the human race?

3rd. That which is inseparably connected with human life.

4th. What is death?

5th. That which is inseparably connected with death.

Many thoughts which will follow under these several heads must necessarily be a repetition of what has been before presented, but our object is to present them together and in their proper order.

1st. What is life? To answer this question clearly and fully is an impossibility, just as impossible as it would be to answer the question, What is God? Life is a manifestation of God. Life is a revelation of God. Life is from God. Life is of God a part.

This is true of all life from that of the highest created intelligence to that of the lowest form of manifested life. All created life is of God, but all created life is not all of God. God's life is above and beyond all created life. The latter is simply a part of, a manifestation of, the eternal life which is God. Beyond this we cannot go in seeking an answer to the question, What is life? Beyond this human intelligence cannot go either in its present existence or in that existence which follows and is everlasting. The mystery of life is unsolved and is unsolvable. It is the mystery of the manifested life of God.

2nd. Of how it is bestowed upon the human race we may know something, but that something is very little. We may know that human life is of the will of God and is not of the will of man, save

as the will of man becomes and is the will of God. Human life lies beyond the limit of all the powers of human beings, just as do all other forms of manifested life. All the powers of all the living united cannot produce the life of one plant, one tree; cannot produce the life of one living animal form. We may know that it is in obedience to an unknown law of life that life is perpetuated. The law itself is past finding out. It belongs to the mysteries of the Infinite, the unknowable to human intelligence. Human agencies enter into and become a part of that law, but how or why this is true we even do not know. Human life has been created without the aid of any human agency. This is self evident, for otherwise there could have been no beginning of a human race. Human life has been created without the aid of the ordinary human agency, for otherwise the life of Jesus Christ could not have been more than human. The lift of Jesus Christ was both human and divine, human as to maternity, divine as to paternity, for it is in this sense alone that his life, his mere existence, is any other or greater revelation to man of the Father's life than is the life of every individual human creature. Christ reveals God to man in a double significance of that phrase: First, by his existence upon the earth as one born of woman, but not born of man, he reveals the existence of God as the author of all life. This is the same kind of revelation of this truth as we have through the creation and existence of the first creature of the human race, typified as Adam, and the first helpmeet to that race, typified as Eve. We say

of Eve, helpmeet to that race, because while woman was linked to and became a part of that race, she is the higher, the purer, the nobler part thereof. The human race is duplex, both in creation and in character. The two parts are inseparably allied as male and female, they are also unalterably separated and removed the one from the other, as male and female. The character of man is not the character of woman, and the character of woman is not the character of man. They occupy two separate and distinct planes in the order of manifested life, and no effort of man or of woman can ever change this decree of God.

Whether woman be thus recognized as a separate and distinct creation with a separate and distinct character from the creation and the character represented by the first man, Adam, or not, we have in these creations three instances wherein the law of life as commonly recognized and known to us has been varied. This simply establishes the truth that we do not know the law; we only know a part of the law. From the foregoing we may reasonably draw this conclusion: In creating human life God uses a law unknown to us except in part. Under this law life and one phase of human character were bestowed upon the first man of the human race, allegorically called Adam; under this same law life and another phase of human character were bestowed upon the first woman of the human race, allegorically called Eve; and under the same unknown law human life and the divine character were bestowed upon another, whose new existence was thus

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created human. This is what God has revealed to us as to how life is bestowed upon those who possess human character in its lowest, its higher and its perfect expression.

3rd. We have thus seen how life is bestowed. Let us next consider which is inseparably connected with life. In doing this we will consider the following as essential elements of human life and which must appear in every life in order that it be classed as human.

First. It must have faculties and power which render it capable of knowing its Creator. Life not possessing these is not human, but is sub-human.

Second. It must have the power of independent reasoning.

Third. It must have the power of imagination.

Fourth. It must have the power of development, without limitation upon that power.

Fifth. It must have those minor faculties which adapt it to existence in a physical world and render it possible for it to be happy and contented therein.

First. All human beings may know their Creator. No sub-human creature can know its Creator. Human life is the lowest expression of life to which such knowledge is possible. This is what constitutes it human. It is not reason which distinguishes man from the brute, for reason is neither more nor less than expanded or developed instinct, which is so bountifully bestowed upon the brute creation. Reason is given to man for his use in his physical environment, and is of little value to him thereafter. While reason will not perish in the spiritual existence, its

use therein must be necessarily limited. The earthly life of the soul is the period of the greatest activity and of the highest development of the power of reason, for it is the period in which that power can serve the soul in largest measure. Reason never revealed God to any human creature, and never can. Therefore when the earth-life of the soul is ended the purposes for which reason was bestowed upon it have been in the main fulfilled. Development in the knowledge of God the Father is the work of all spiritual existence, and in this work reason has no part. Such knowledge can come to the soul alone through its spiritual powers of worship and obedience, as we have heretofore explained. The same is true of all those faculties and powers of the soul which adapt it to the enjoyment of its physical state of existence. They all either perish as wholly physical in their nature and use or become subservient and unused powers if spiritual in their nature. Whatever is adapted to the soul's happiness and contentment in its spiritual existence remains unto it and is freely used by it. All else perishes, either because it is wholly physical in its nature and cannot be used, or because it is not so essential and is unused. An unused power perishes from non-use. This is a law which is revealed through nature in this world.

Second. While all this is true of the power of reason, yet reason is necessary to render life human. Man without reason could not maintain a physical existence, could not conquer or subdue nature, could not discover the forces, laws and powers of the physical creation and subject them to his use. It

is reason that makes human life on earth possible, and that makes development during human life also possible. Reason is the master power of the human soul while its existence remains human. It is the earthly sovereign of all the powers which the soul possesses in its human state, but its reign ends with human death. Thereafter it becomes one of the soul's lowliest of remaining powers, itself subject to those which are wholly spiritual.

Third. The soul in human life must have the power of imagination. Without this power it could develop none of its spiritual powers, could resist none of its human inclinations, would be powerless against temptation, would be unhuman in all its developments. Imagination is the most powerful aid in human life to correct and upright living, and to the faithful discharge of human duties and responsibilities. What is that which we thus call imagination? It is the power of the soul to contemplate facts and relations which do not exist, but which might exist, and to deduce conclusions therefrom, the same as if they actually did exist. Such conclusions thus deduced are the guide and the support of the soul throughout its earthly existence. Imagination is denied to all life sub-human. It is inseparable from all life which carries with it moral obligations and moral responsibilities. Therefore imagination can never cease as an active power of the soul.

Fourth. Human life must also have the power of development, and that power must be without limitation. This does not mean that such power must

be infinite, for infinity does not apply to anything created. Infinity cannot be attained by any power which is itself created, but within infinity there can be no bounds set to the development of any power bestowed upon a life created morally responsible. Such limitation would be inconsistent with the bestowal of the power. Individual effort is made the measure of individual development, and this will be ever true.

Fifth. It must have those minor faculties which adapt it to its existence in a physical world and render it possible for it to be happy and contented therein. This the infinite love of the Creator necessitates in every form of life which is created, and this truth is revealed through all life created. Life without such faculties would in itself deny the attribute of infinite love. To deny this is to deny God. Life is in itself the fullest and the clearest revelation of God's existence which the world contains. As we advance in spiritual understanding this truth will be forced upon us all. We may not accept it in this world, but will be forced to accept it in the world to come. Life anywhere which is unbearable is an impossibility. Life which is a burden is an impossibility anywhere, except such burden be self-imposed. This is true of life in hell. It is not true of any other state or condition of life either among intelligent or non-intelligent creatures in so far as knowledge is given us. We therefore have to deal only with the happiness which God has created, and not with the sorrows which man has imposed upon himself. We will therefore treat of life as wholly

contented, wholly happy. In order that life should be wholly contented, wholly happy, it must be endowed with faculties perfectly adapting it to the environment and the capacity bestowed upon it. This is true of all life as it was originally created. It remains true of all life which is below intelligent existence. It remains true of all human life except where it has been modified by our own acts or the acts of those through whom life has been bestowed upon us. Barring inherited conditions, we are each born with faculties perfectly adapting us to our environment and our capacity. We have the power to satisfy every desire and every longing which belongs to our human existence. Perfect happiness is neither more nor less than such satisfaction. If, therefore, we are not perfectly happy and contented it is because of our own acts or of inherited conditions. How, then, are we to account for human unhappiness, and for endless and hopeless sorrow in hell? Unhappiness rests upon human error. Sorrow in hell rests upon purposed disobedience. The human error may be our own or it may be of those who have preceded us. We have the power to guard against both, therefore we have it in our power to be perfectly happy. We have the power to obey and we have the power to disobey; therefore if we choose disobedience the sorrows of hell come through our own act. It is impossible that we should possess intelligence and should be contented and happy, without possessing the power to follow our own wills. This power goes with and belongs to intelligent existence everywhere. The two are inseparable.

Neither can exist without the other, and God be God. This is not all that life must be in order that it be human, but life must be all that we have described in order that it be human.

4th. What is death? We have answered this inquiry so fully in previous pages that it is unnecessary to say more here. Death is the absence of manifested life. It is not extinction; it is oblivion. There can be no extinction of anything that is created. There can be change of material form, but not extinction of material substance. That which God has created is everlasting, as is its Creator. This is not only true of the soul and of its spiritual powers, but it is true of the soul and its physical powers. It is not only true of the soul; it is true of its physical body as well. It is not only true of the human body; it is true of all material substance, of all material worlds. Nothing, absolutely nothing, can ever be extinguished. Death, therefore, when applied to material substance, means and can only mean change of form. Death when applied to the soul's faculties and powers means and can only mean the loss of the power to use. The term death can never be applied to the soul itself, for it is deathless. The loss of the power to use is oblivion; it is not death.

5th. We next consider that which is inseparably connected with death. In doing this we subdivide the theme thus:

First. The death of the body.

Second. The death of the soul's physical powers.

Third. The death of the soul's spiritual powers.

Fourth. The state of oblivion.

First. What is the death of the body? It is the dissolution of the body and the soul. They exist together; they use each other; then they cease to exist together and to use each other. Such ceasing is called death. The body, no longer sustained by the soul, decomposes—that is to say, is resolved back into the simpler elements of nature. It again becomes unorganized matter; what we might describe as ashes, or earth, and gases. The body was built up from these elements; it has gone back unto these elements; and this is all that there is of death when the term is applied to the body. The period of its use by the soul has passed, never to be resumed again, for the reason that the soul will never again take on a material existence. A higher form of life never descends into a lower form of existence. Life may descend into a lower state of existence, but not into a lower form. We speak of created life, not of uncreated life. Created life begins with the lowest possible form in which it can be manifested and ascends into such higher form as may be possible to it. It never descends in the form through which it expresses itself. Uncreated life is not governed by such law. It might be expressed through any form of existence and be divinely perfect wherever expressed. It was thus with Christ, who in his human existence expressed uncreated life, divinely perfect. Death, therefore, when applied to the body, means everlasting dissolution and the everlasting reversion of the body to the simpler elements of the material world.

Second. We will next consider the death of the soul's physical powers. Such powers of the soul can only act through the soul's physical organization, the body. The body ceasing forever to exist as such, all the powers of the soul requiring the physical organization for their manifestation and use, must forever cease to be manifested or used. The power itself does not cease to exist in the sense of being obliterated or destroyed, but it passes into oblivion through lack of ability or opportunity to use it. This and nothing but this constitutes the death of the soul's physical powers.

Third. The same is true of the soul's spiritual powers. They cease to be used, if lost or dead, because the power to use them has been taken from the soul. If this happens it results as an effect of the soul's own act, and not because of the laws which govern its existence, as does human death. All of this has been heretofore fully dwelt upon.

Fourth. What, then, is oblivion, into which these cast-off powers of the human soul pass? It is a state of non-use; a state of inactivity; a state of rest as distinguished from activity. It is not a state of death in the sense that if the opportunity for use was again presented the power itself would not be there and would not again spring into activity and use, but it is death in the sense that such power never will be again called into use. Oblivion is the state of all spiritual powers destroyed by the soul's own act. It is the state of all the physical powers de-

stroyed by the death of the body. It is the state of all created life which is dependent upon a material existence for its manifestation, after such material existence ceases.

CHAPTER III.

ELIPHAZ, JOB'S FIRST FRIEND.—THE NECESSITY FOR SUFFERING AND THE EFFECTS OF SUFFERING.

Eliphaz symbolizes the soul's belief in its God. Such is the friend who comes to all as he came to Job. What does this friend teach whenever and wherever he comes? Submission to God's will; obedience to God's command; love towards our Creator. Let suffering come to the human soul, and this friend comes as surely as comes the suffering. He pleads the cause of God whose divine purpose permits human suffering, necessitates human suffering, and uses human suffering for his own ends. What, then, shall we say of human suffering? We will treat the subject at length and under the following heads:

1st. The necessity which exists for human suffering.

2nd. The benefits accruing from human suffering.

3rd. The possibility that suffering may never cease throughout the life of the soul in heaven.

By human suffering we mean physical, mental and spiritual suffering. They are all the outgrowth of the same necessity and serve the same purpose. We shall therefore treat of all three under one and the same argument.

1st. That a necessity exists for suffering, its very existence proves. God permits nothing to exist for which there is not a necessity. Infinite power is never exerted without the existence of a necessity for its exertion. The necessity for suffering exists because of God's infinite purpose concerning the lives and the happiness of all created intelligent beings. That purpose is beyond the comprehension of all finite powers, but that such purpose exists has been declared by the revelation of God's infinite attributes. The acceptance of the truth of such existing attributes necessitates the acceptance of the truth of the existence of such divine and infinite purpose. It also necessitates the acceptance of the truth that such purpose concerns the happiness of the greatest possible number of all created intelligences, both human and super-human. There can be no anger, no revenge, no punishment known to God's revealed and infinite attributes. Either is inconsistent with the existence of these attributes. The law of necessity is the law which governs God's universe. The law of cause and effect—that is, of effect following cause—is but one degree below it in universality of application and in the production of results. These two laws must be relied upon to harmonize all suffering with the attributes of infinite power, infinite wisdom and infinite love. When rightly considered and correctly understood, these two laws will do this, and this is the object of the present argument.

First, then, as to the necessity for human suffering. As we have just said, the fact that human

suffering exists, compels the acceptance of the truth that a necessity for it also exists, by all who receive and accept the revelation of the existence of God's three infinite attributes, infinite power, infinite wisdom and infinite love. These three infinite attributes cannot co-exist under the control of one will, and human suffering likewise exist, without a necessity therefor. We take it for granted that those who have followed our thoughts thus far are only such as have received and accepted the revelation of the existence of these three infinite attributes, hence we will not here enter into any review of such revelation. God is revealed to man from the beginning of revelation as Almighty. Through Moses he was revealed as Jehovah, and through Christ as Redeemer and Saviour; infinite in power, infinite in wisdom, and infinite in love; three infinite powers directed by one will. Trinity in unity, the simplest and yet the highest and the plainest conception of a triune God-Head that the mind of man can conceive. Christ never caused men to suffer. He did not go about producing sickness, disease, pain, agony of mind, or sorrow of soul. No follower of his can think of him as any other than the very opposite of this, and Christ is in himself the revelation of this attribute of infinite love. Hence if we accept Christ and the revelation which he embodies we must think of God whom he reveals, by the same thoughts which we have of Christ, the loving, pitying, helping, saving Redeemer. Christ did not destroy all the pain, sorrow and anguish by which he was surrounded, not even in those who were nearest, and by earthly ties alone,

dearest, to him of all mankind, because he was himself obedient to all the attributes of the God whom he revealed. The law of necessity and the law of cause and effect governed Christ upon the earth as they govern God the Father, always. Suffering is therefore a part of the infinite purpose of God concerning all his intelligent creatures. We have no right to say that that infinite purpose limits suffering to the human race, or to the short span of the earthly existence of the human soul. God has not revealed such to be the truth, and he has revealed the opposite to be the truth when we rightly comprehend such revelation. If suffering is a necessity in human life it is because of some law which governs the existence of such necessity. God's laws are universal in their application. No law of God exists which is applicable to the human race alone, or to angelic beings alone. All laws are applicable to all creatures under like conditions. Conditions alone can vary the application of the law. They do not vary the law itself, they only vary the application of it. The law exists eternal as the God of whom it is a part.

With the foregoing clearly in mind, let us now seek to find the necessity which compels human suffering. To find a cause we must study its effect. If we can correctly understand the effect, we can from such understanding assign the cause, just as certainly as that we can predict the effect of a cause which we understand. We do both because of the constancy and the universality of the law of cause and effect, which we will now call the second law

of nature, the law of necessity being the first and the greatest.

We must, then, analyze carefully the effect of human suffering. This we will do under the following subdivisions:

First. Its effect upon the physical existence of the sufferer.

Second. Its effect upon the spiritual existence of the sufferer.

Third. Its effect upon the physical and the spiritual lives of others.

Under these three heads we must get all from it that we can possibly know. Under the head of the physical effect upon the life of the sufferer we must also consider the effect of idleness, of labor and of luxury.

Man becomes that which he makes of himself, but in the making of himself he is not wholly free. He is free as to his will, but he is not free as to his environment. Freedom of will is his by the gift of life. Environment is of divine purpose. We cannot govern the environment into which we are born, but that environment is certain to govern us in a greater or less degree. This certainty God foreknows and uses in giving us life. Each member of the human race, therefore, begins his existence, with the gift of human life, direct from God his Creator. Such life, being human, must embody and contain all that is common to human life, all that constitutes it human, all that distinguishes it from other orders of life. In addition thereto this gift of life carries with it trends

of individual character, which we will call individual characteristics, which are bestowed through heredity. It also carries with it environment, physical, social, intellectual and spiritual. None of these destroy the freedom of the individual will. It has the power to ignore, control, and rise above them all, but they do influence that will, and do influence it strongly. Man makes himself what he becomes, but in that making God's leadings are ever present and man becomes that which God purposed he should become. This, man does by the exercise of his own free will, untrammeled and unhampered, save by inherited characteristics and environment. For these the individual is not responsible, God bestowed them. The individual is responsible for any willful disobedience of any law of God, of which law he has knowledge in his heart, and such responsibility is neither lessened nor enlarged by reason of either the inherited characteristics or the bestowed environment. Willful disobedience is the measure and the only measure of all sin.

In each individual human life, therefore, we find the following conditions and responsibilities. Life came to us as a gift from God direct. That gift brought to us all that is common to the life which is human, and it also brought to us inherited characteristics which are individual, and an environment which is distinctive. From these we are to build up individual character, individual results, individual destiny. If from this point God withheld from us all influences guiding or leading us in such development, would it be consistent with the attribute of

infinite love? Would it reveal to us infinite justice, which is a part thereof? To me it would not. It therefore follows that God must follow us throughout our earthly lives with other influences which either aid or hinder us in the one great trial and test and purpose of our existence, the choice of obedience or of disobedience to the laws of our Creator. Such influences are thus shown to be a necessity to our creation. What are the influences thus used by our Creator? They are physical suffering, mental agony, spiritual sorrow; they are prosperity and its opposite, poverty, in all their varying degrees; they are labor and idle luxurious ease, in all their varied forms; they are evil associations and influences and good associations and influences in all their shades and degrees; they are all things that tend to weaken and all things that tend to strengthen the will of the individual soul. Under all these influences, great and small, the will of the soul acts and fixes its everlasting destiny, and in such choice infinite wisdom and infinite love have made it no harder and yet no easier for one soul to will and choose obedience than it is for every other soul created to make the same choice. Among all such influences brought to bear upon the individual soul there are none more potent than those which arise from physical suffering, mental agony and spiritual sorrow. This we will all recognize more or less clearly as the thought is presented. Human suffering is one thing to one soul, another thing to another soul. No two souls created have been affected by it in precisely the same manner or to precisely the same extent. Infinite wisdom has

adjusted human suffering to each individual being so that he should derive therefrom just what is required to make him equal with all other human beings in his final choice between obedience and disobedience. When we shall have accepted this truth, then will we bear suffering with patience and with resignation, thanking God for the gift of life with suffering, as we now thank him for the gift of life without suffering. Suffering is the equalizer of the goodness and the mercy and the love of God to all souls. It is the revelation of infinite wisdom as to what is required in each individual case in order to do this, and it is the revelation of infinite love, in that God thus equalizes the chances and the powers of all in the making of that one choice which is the object and the end of the gift of life. God creates all intelligent beings for the sole purpose that they might choose between obedience and disobedience to all of his revealed laws, in order that they might become like unto himself in their several states of life and according to their several degrees of understanding, or that he might be hidden from them in the oblivion of a spiritual death, through which they still fulfill his infinite purpose and meet the necessity for their creation. Suffering is the most powerful influence which God brings to bear upon the human race. Its effect is so direct, so powerful, and so clearly defined that they who suffer and have been influenced by it cannot fail to recognize either the benign or the detrimental effects which have arisen from it in their own individual cases. If you have recognized these effects as beneficial to yourself, then

you can and do thank God for imposing the suffering upon you. If you cannot recognize beneficent effects, but can recognize detrimental effects, then you may not be able to thank God for imposing the suffering, but should be able to accept the truth that it is imposed by infinite love, and that it but equalizes you with all others in meeting that one great trial and test for which life was given you.

Second. This leads us to consider the effect of suffering upon the spiritual life of the sufferer. If suffering aids the soul in its human existence in that choice which is the object and the purpose of its creation, is it not reasonable that it should also aid the soul in its spiritual existence, in remaining steadfast to such choice? If God bestowed upon his human creatures one common character with individual characteristics and varying environment, which, remaining unequalized, would render it harder for one soul than for another to choose obedience, then the continuing effect of such characteristics and the continuing effect of such environment would make it harder in its spiritual existence for one soul to remain steadfast to such choice than for another soul, unless such inequality was equalized by continuing influences. This makes sorrow in heaven possible. This makes it certain that something corresponding in effect with the effect of human suffering in earth does exist in heaven. That something can be nothing more nor less than spiritual sorrow, spiritual suffering, whatever we may understand by these terms. It is impossible that the soul of man should ever escape the guiding and equalizing influ-

ences of its Creator's infinite love, his infinite justice. We accept the truth that the soul's individual characteristics are as variable as are the number of souls created; that these influence us in our thoughts, our purposes and our will, here upon earth. It appears self-evident that they will continue to influence us in our spiritual existence. If this be true, then these effects of inherited characteristics and bestowed environment must be equalized in some manner in our spiritual existence, otherwise they would cease to reveal infinite love, infinite justice. In earth I assert that this is done by physical suffering, mental anguish and spiritual sorrow. Physical suffering cannot follow the soul into its spiritual existence; the other two may go with it and remain with it therein. To my mind and understanding, this they certainly do. How, then, about suffering in hell? That will be considered at another time and in another connection.

Third. We do not suffer alone, neither are the effects of our suffering limited to our own lives. Human love, human sympathy and human hatred are so powerful that they draw to themselves much of the effect of human suffering. We have all felt its effect directly and powerfully. In such cases was the suffering laid upon the individuals who endured it for their own good or for ours? That question can only be answered in one way. It was imposed upon the individual for all the effects which resulted from it, whether those effects were upon the individual suffering or upon others; whether such effects were present and apparently transient, or

whether their influences promise to extend and broaden throughout the endless existence of the soul. We, then, suffer, not alone for our own good, but also for the good of others, maybe solely for the good of others, as were the sufferings of Christ our Saviour. Is it a strange thought to us that we may be called upon to suffer for the good of others? If it is, let us familiarize ourselves with the thought and learn to know it as a truth, for it is a truth, revealed by the life and the sufferings of Christ our Redeemer. Not that we suffer upon the same plane, or for the same purpose that Christ suffered, but that we do suffer under the same law which necessitated his suffering. Vicarious suffering! What is the meaning of it? It is that suffering which we are all called upon to endure for others, in some form or manner. It is based upon the principle of the unity of all created intelligences, of every order from the highest to the lowest. That one should suffer for the good of all is infinite justice, and infinite justice requires this. If each suffered for his own good alone, then it would be necessary that all should suffer, or that none should suffer. We have asserted and tried to show that suffering exists because of a necessity that it should exist. Is it a necessity that all should suffer? It is not. Many, very many, may escape suffering themselves, but none can escape the effect of suffering. Such effect is a necessity for all, and is experienced by all, but all need not suffer in order that this be true. In this truth we find the solution of the mystery of the imposition of suffering upon the few, and the escape of the many therefrom. Infinite

love forbids the imposition of suffering upon one more soul than is required by the necessity of the law imposing suffering upon some. Is there, then, a law necessitating suffering and necessitating the imposition of it upon the few? A belief in the infinite attributes of God must answer this question affirmatively and must so answer it without a doubt remaining in the mind of the believer, as to the truth of that answer. Every cry that is wrung from the soul of man, either by physical pain, mental anguish or spiritual sorrow, comes because of a necessity compelling it, whether the effect thereof be upon the one who suffers or upon others who do not suffer. Sometimes we may almost read this law and the necessity for its existence in the very surroundings and effects of the individual cases of suffering which come within our observation, and of which we ourselves feel some effect. A ship goes down, supposedly by the act of man. Two hundred and sixty-six souls rush through death into eternity, suffering loss of human life and human opportunities. Was it for anything that they themselves had done that this came upon them? No one dare say, Yes. Then what was the necessity therefor? That a new nation should be born into the family of nations; that a people should be made free; that one civilization should be destroyed and another established; that a nation should be aroused to new duties, new responsibilities and a new destiny; that new methods should follow old methods, new government follow old government, even at the antipodes of the earth. All this we in our day have seen. By this God has shown to us who

can read his message that we do not live for ourselves alone, neither do we suffer and die because of what we ourselves have done, but that we live, we suffer, we die, to fulfill God's infinite purpose.

As it is with nations and peoples, so is it with individuals. My own life has revealed this to me; yours may have revealed it to you.

Suffering is therefore a necessity, imposed upon some for the good of all. We do not all suffer, but we all bear the record of the influence of suffering upon our individual destinies. I am what I am because others have suffered to the end that I might become what I am. I have myself suffered to the end that others might become what they now are. I realize that I could not have become what I am if others had not suffered for me, and I realize that I may yet be called upon to suffer in order that others may become what God's infinite purpose necessitates that they shall become. This is vicarious suffering, and the law which necessitates and governs it is the same law which necessitated and governed the vicarious sufferings of Jesus Christ. It is not the suffering of Christ, nor the death of Christ, which pardons sin. It is the revelation of God through Christ which giveth spiritual life to the soul of man, and which constitutes the new birth of the soul. Neither his suffering, nor his blood, nor his death, availeth to do this where such revelation is lacking. If such revelation could have come to man, without the suffering, without the shedding of blood, without the death, Christ would not have passed through the agonies endured by him. These were a necessity to

attract all men to him through the God-given power of sympathy, and thus lead them to an acceptance of the revelation. The revelation and the acceptance of that revelation are the potent factors in the salvation of the soul. All else are but aids to these.

2nd. We now take up the second subdivision of this theme, to wit, the benefits accruing from human suffering. If it be true that infinite justice necessitates that individual influences be brought to bear upon the souls of men in order that it should be equally easy and equally difficult for each to choose between obedience and disobedience to the commands of God, and that human suffering is the medium through which such influences are brought to bear upon the human soul, then we have a sufficient cause for, and a rational explanation of, individual human suffering.

Add to such influences those which are national or world-wide in their effects, although individual in the manner of their production, and we have a sufficient cause for, and a rational explanation of, all human suffering, whether it be individual or collective. This we assert to be the truth. God with his infinite attributes does not permit the existence of any human suffering, whether it be individual or collective, without the existence of a necessity therefor, without a purpose to be fulfilled thereby, and without the manifestation of infinite justice displayed therein. Such suffering does not and cannot exist without meeting such necessity, without fulfilling such purpose, and without being productive of the greatest good to the largest number of his intelligent

creatures. If I can establish this assertion of truth to the satisfaction of one human sufferer, then I shall have rendered a true service to mankind. If I can do this for many then by the ratio of such number shall this service be multiplied. In seeking to do this I lay down one broad proposition which must be first accepted and believed. It is: The measure of good to all created intelligent beings must govern in the infliction and distribution of human suffering. The individual must sink himself in the great aggregate of created intelligences, and must in this life accept suffering, whether physical or mental or spiritual, without the thought that an individual and personal error or sin has brought it upon him, and without the thought that it is for his own good alone that he suffers. Human suffering is neither more nor less than human altruism, forced upon the race unknowingly and unwillingly, nevertheless, human altruism. It is upon this broad ground alone, that the mind of man can conceive of both the necessity and the infinite justice embodied in the fact of physical suffering, mental anguish and spiritual sorrow.

In order to accept these truths we must go one step deeper into the mysteries of the creation of intelligent beings. Life is given to no intelligent creature for his own good and for his own possible happiness. This would be a narrow view of creation and of that infinite purpose which preceded it. God's attributes are infinite in their application to all his creatures as an aggregate intelligent creation. They are not infinite when limited in

their application to any one individual of that creation, except in the sense that that individual is a part of the aggregate whole. This means simply this: that one or many individuals according to God's wisdom and pleasure, must suffer and die, physically and spiritually, without cause other than that the good of the whole demands such suffering and death. The individual suffers and dies without cause or fault on his part as an individual. The cause lies in a necessity that is applicable to the whole. This is the broadest view that we are called upon to accept. There may be individual cause and individual good connected with human suffering. The cause and the good may attach to those near and dear unto us, or to those wholly unknown to us and remote from us. In all cases the suffering has a cause, immediate or remote, and produces an effect immediate or remote when considered in relation to the sufferer. It therefore follows that all human suffering, whether it be physical pain, mental anguish, or spiritual sorrow, is necessitated by the requirements of the individual sufferer, or by the requirements of those near to him, or of those more remote from him, or by the requirements of the whole intelligent creation, and no such suffering is in vain. If no suffering exists except such as is required, and none is in vain, then good must come of all human suffering. Can we establish this as a truth? In order to do so let us consider the subject in the following manner.

First. What is the effect of human suffering upon ourselves individually?

Second. What is its effect upon others situated as we are?

Third. What is its effect upon other differently connected with the sufferer?

From these three views of human suffering we must draw our conclusions.

First. As to ourselves, there is not one of us who has not experienced positive and marked effects from human suffering. It has drawn our hearts to the sufferer by a sympathetic love which is beyond description. Love is the most powerful incentive of the human character. It above all other things makes of the human character what it is and what it becomes. In making this assertion I may have gone beyond what would be the thought of many. I speak from what I feel and know within myself. I feel and know that I am but an individual of a race similarly endowed with myself. Love is both the inciting power and the governing power which rules the thoughts and the acts of mankind. What then is love? Has man ever defined it? Can man ever define it? Not unless man can express in words, a human power, a human passion, a human state; for love is a passion, a power, and a state. In its purity it may and does enwrap the world and rise to heaven. In its impurity it blights earth, bars the gates of heaven, and opens wide the portals of hell. A passion and a power which may be the holiest and may be the deadliest in its effects is worthy of more than a passing thought. Can we fathom the mysteries of love and that infinite wisdom which bestowed it as a passion and a power

upon the human race? We can in part, but in part only. To do this we must imagine what man would be without love. A monster of selfish hate, is the only figure that can come before our thoughts to thus represent man; a brute with intelligence, yea more than a brute, for brutes do love their own. A sordid selfish hating soul cannot be bestowed upon an intelligent creature and God be true to his own infinite attributes. Such, man would have been without the gift of love. Love is the revelation and the image of our God, written within our own being. None can escape this revelation of his Creator, for it is a common gift to all humanity. Such is love, controlled by purity of desire and purpose. Purity of desire and purpose may be likened to a fountain from which none but pure, sweet waters can ever flow, and we may drink of such waters as God has bestowed upon us the power. Beware lest impurity of desire and purpose enter into such fountain and embitter the waters thereof for thereafter there is spiritual death in the draught therefrom. Sin does not lie in the act committed, but in the desire and purpose to commit an act which would be disobedience. To drink of the sweet waters of this pure fountain leads the soul of man towards heaven just as to drink of the impure waters of this bitter fountain leads the soul towards hell. God therefore with infinite wisdom has bestowed upon man, in this power and passion of love, the highest possible incentive to lead the soul towards heaven and into a knowledge of himself, conditioned only that it be used in obedience to his commands, and has given

to all mankind the power and the understanding to thus use it. The power of love for good, when thus used is beyond human comprehension. No such mighty power for good when rightly directed can be bestowed without carrying with it the necessity of making it a correspondingly mighty power for evil when wrongly used. The power is the same in both cases, and must of necessity be the same. It is left to the choice of each individual to direct this power either as an aid to his own salvation and everlasting happiness, or as a force dragging him down to spiritual death and everlasting sorrow.

Now, recognizing this as true of love and presuming that our love is wholly pure, I ask the question: Is there anything that can so stir this power and passion of love within us, as does human suffering? If we but analyze our own feelings aright we cannot but answer that there is not. Human suffering draws us in love to the one who suffers, by a power that is irresistible, whatever may be the relationship between us and the sufferer. It may even stir this power within an enemy's breast, and soften hearts debased and brought low through the power of an impure love. This thought is the key which unlocks the mystery of human suffering. It is the key which unlocks the mystery of the sufferings of Jesus Christ. Human suffering is a necessity to the salvation of the human race just as Christ's sufferings were a necessity to its redemption:

Second. What is its effect upon others situated as we are? We have traced the effect of human suffering upon ourselves as declared to us through our

own experience. It now remains to inquire into its effect upon others similarly situated and finally upon others dissimilarly situated to ourselves. In doing this we assume that human character is a constant factor, the same in all human beings, modified alone by individual characteristics. The fundamental elements of human character upon which the preceding argument rests are common to all who possess human character; therefore in so far as that argument is true, it applies equally to every human creature, as it does to ourselves individually. Human sympathy is an element of human character and therefore it must be found in some degree, as an element of the character of every human being. It is constant and ever present although sometimes overshadowed by other elements especially dominant or especially aroused. We may safely conclude therefore that the effect of human suffering is always the same upon others similarly situated as ourselves, as it has been and is now upon us. The individual, the community, the state, the nation, the world are moved by one common impulse of sympathy, springing from one common cause, to the limit that such cause extends. The effect of the cause is limited alone by the knowledge of the cause. I speak of one common and universal law. The effect is subject to such modifications as are produced by personal relationship, acquaintance, nationality, and aroused passions; but subject to these the law and the effect are ever present and constant in their manifestations.

Third. Suffering by the brute creation produces the same effect in man as does human suffering.

It is only less marked in degree. This should be sufficient to reveal to us a universal law of sympathy extending from the highest creature to the lowest creature, capable of manifesting it. Man is certainly not such lowest creature, for brutes manifest this power in marked degree. Even the brute may show sympathy for the suffering of man. If therefore such universal law of sympathy prevails, it extends from angel to man, as it does from man to brute. It extends from man to angel as it does from brute to man. This I assert and believe to be the truth. Human suffering has its effect upon angel, just as brute suffering has its effect upon man. It is beyond the power of human intellect to measure the necessity which produced human suffering and all the effects that spring therefrom. We may only grasp the truth that there is such necessity and that there are such effects. We must leave the development of these truths to an eternity of progressive understanding. This much is sufficient to give us some insight into the necessity for human suffering and the benefits resulting therefrom.

3rd. These thoughts lead up to the thought that suffering may never cease throughout the life of the soul in heaven. Repugnant as such thought may be to our preconceived thoughts of heaven, it must be considered and considered carefully. We have shown that the benefits accruing from human suffering are derived through and on account of that element of character which we call sympathy. We have also suggested (if not shown) that sympathy is an element of character common to all crea-

tures capable of manifesting it. No one admitting the existence of God will question the assertion that it is an element of his character, a part of the attribute of infinite love. The assertion then that sympathy as an element of character extends from God the Father, down through all orders of his creatures to the very lowest capable of manifesting it, can be made with confidence that it will be accepted by the great majority. What is sympathy? It is altruistic love born of and sustained by suffering. I can give no fuller or more comprehensive definition of it than is contained in these few words. This is what I mean by sympathy; this is what I am thinking of and writing about. If to you sympathy means something else, then we are not thinking of the same thing. If therefore sympathy is born of and is sustained by suffering it cannot outlast or outlive suffering. If suffering ceases sympathy dies. God, without sympathy! Angelic creatures without sympathy! A human soul without sympathy! Can this ever become true? Never, while the character of God continues as it is revealed to us; never, while angelic character remains angelic; never, while human character remains human. Then when will suffering cease? Never, throughout eternity. Is there then suffering in heaven? The human soul is born to suffer and will ever suffer. It is born to meet the necessity that there should be suffering, and it will forever meet and fulfill that necessity. Suffering will continue as long as the life which is now human, or ever has been human, continues, and through suffering shall this element of divine char-

acter be ever revealed to all intelligent creatures. But shall such suffering be in heaven as well as in hell? There can be but one answer to this question, and that is, Yes. Do the good, the pure, the righteous, suffer in earth? So shall they also suffer in heaven, for the laws of God are changeless and are everlasting. If a necessity exists that the good, the pure, the righteous, should suffer in earth, that same necessity will ever continue, and will ever cause the same suffering. Job was a perfect man, and Job suffered. Job was in the spiritual state of heaven when he suffered, for to the perfect heaven begins in earth, and is unchanged by human death. Heavenly suffering after death can contain nothing of the physical, but is limited to mental anguish and spiritual sorrow. What produces it? What produced it in Job while he was in the heavenly state in earth life? The will of God, because of the necessity that it should exist. Death changes not the heavenly state of those who enter it in earth life, save to eliminate the physical from their existence. All else remain the same even to the mental anguish, and spiritual sorrow which come to the good the pure and the righteous in earth.

CHAPTER IV.

BILDAD, JOB'S SECOND FRIEND.—INDIVIDUALITY IN LIFE AND INDIVIDUALITY IN SUFFERING.

A second friend who came to Job was Bildad. This friend also comes to every suffering creature, in the thought and in the acceptance of the truth, that God's wisdom is infinite. Bildad stands, figuratively, for this truth, and for the assurances which the soul possesses of this truth. Bildad also takes up the cause of God and argues with the soul which suffers, pleading the infinite wisdom of Him who permits, nay requires suffering. In that pleading let us follow as God gives to us the power to understand. Life must be considered in its broad sense of covering all created intelligent existence; and further, that the happiness of such life is preserved to those who possess happiness, through the suffering of those who suffer. With these two thoughts in mind we take up this subject and treat it in the following manner.

First. Individual life is not an individual gift to the one possessing it, but aggregate life is an aggregate gift to all who possess it.

Second. Individual life must ever be eliminated when we consider questions of moral government and of God's infinite attributes.

Third. Individuality of life is an impossible con-

ception when the laws of life are applied to aggregate life.

Fourth. This will lead us to the conclusion that while the individuality of our life is an experienced truth, it is also a delusion when we seek to apply to it the revelation and the laws of God, the Father.

First. When we consider our own life, what it is, the purpose for which it has been given us, and the results which spring from its existence, we are disposed to think of it as an individual gift to ourselves. This would place us in a different relationship towards God our Creator, than that in which we really stand. This would require a different interpretation of God's revelations and a different understanding of his laws than that which is correct. On the basis of the individuality of human life, God's revelations and his laws are in many particulars inexplicable. On the basis of the unity, of the oneness, of all created intelligent life, they all become explicable. It therefore becomes a matter of necessity for a correct understanding of this revelation and these laws, that we form a correct conclusion as to what we are and why we are, and this is the purpose of these thoughts. In reaching this conclusion we must take into account all created existence, that which is above us and that which is beneath us. All created existence is of God, is a part of God, is a revelation of God, and as such it is and must be one harmonious and perfect work and revelation of God. To omit therefrom any one order of life now existing would destroy the perfection of the whole, both as a work and as a revelation. In

this truth lies the necessity for the creation of man, and for his creation on the plane of intelligent existence which man occupies. If God had created man upon a higher plane of intelligent existence than that which he occupies, it would have left his work and his revelation imperfect, inasmuch as there would then have remained one possible plane of intelligent existence unoccupied. God could not create man upon a lower plane of intelligent existence than that which he occupies, and endow him with an intelligence sufficient to enable him to recognize and know his own Creator. The power to do this is the boundary line which divides intelligent from non-intelligent life. There is no creature below man which can recognize and know God. This is a possibility to all men, but is attained by comparatively few men, so few that it makes it certain that there can be no further subdivision of intelligent existence in a downward scale, and that therefore man, created as an intelligent and morally responsible creature closed the last link in a chain of manifested life from the lowest form of material existence wherein life can be manifested, up to the highest form of spiritual existence wherein life is manifested.

Man has existed upon the earth morally irresponsible, too low in the degree of his intelligence to know, or to attain unto the knowledge of his Creator, during his material existence. Whether such human beings can attain unto such knowledge during their spiritual existence, is a question not necessary to be considered here. We do find, however, that in the progress of manifested life, from the

lowest forms of life upwards, there came a period when man was sufficiently endowed to enable him during earthly life, to find and to know his Creator. This new endowment constituted the beginning of the Adamic race. I speak now of man distinctively and not of mankind. The percentage of men who exert their powers and attain unto this knowledge is so small, that it carries with it the proof that any lower degree of intelligence, than that bestowed upon men, would fail utterly in enabling its possessors to acquire this knowledge. Men therefore occupy the very lowest plane of intelligent existence, wherein it is possible for them to acquire such knowledge. Not so of woman. Woman is human as man is human. They are of one and the same race but not of one and the same degree of intelligence. Woman is endowed with a higher degree of intelligence than is man. Woman's life is a manifestation of life upon a higher plane of intelligent existence than is man's life. Woman's life subdivides the span which lies between man's existence and angelic existence. More women find and know God than do men. This is because they are one step nearer God in the plain of intelligent existence which they occupy. Now understand me, the word intelligence and the term intelligent existence as used herein are applied wholly to spiritual knowledge and to spiritual understanding. They have no reference whatever to matters pertaining to our present material existence. In all such matters men excel women. God so created them and no human effort can ever change the order of that creation.

We find therefore one continuous chain of manifested life from the lowest form wherein it is possible for life to be manifested through a material existence, up to the highest form of spiritual existence made known to us through God's revelation. Of this chain man forms one link. Woman forms another, and angelic life a third. If you deny the power to ascend along this chain you cannot deny the power to descend along it, and even this is all we need as a premise for our conclusion. This chain of life in its entirety, is a manifestation of the life of God, is an expression of God's life, is a revelation to us and to all intelligent creatures, of God's life. As such it is now a perfect work, a perfect manifestation, and will become a perfect revelation. In this chain the human race occupies a place. It was created to fill that place, to perfect the work, the manifestation, and the revelation. That it should be thus created was a necessity, not a necessity to or for the human race itself, but a necessity to the continued happiness of all intelligent creatures superior to the human race. To meet this necessity the individual of the human race is nothing, the race itself is everything. God therefore purposed from the beginning to create a human race which would fill the span between the unintelligent existence below man and angelic existence above man. That race must subserve the purpose of its creation. It must demonstrate the truth that no lower form of intelligent existence is possible wherein the creature can find and know its Creator, and it must also demonstrate the truth that no further subdivision

of intelligent existence can intervene between mankind and angelic existence. In order that these necessities be met woman is created higher than man, and both are endowed with spiritual natures, spiritual powers, and the possibility of spiritual life. The number of the human race among men and likewise among women, who shall exert these powers and attain spiritual life is of necessity limited. What that number in each case may be, is alone known to God; but man can comprehend this truth, that if the whole human race should attain unto spiritual life by seeking and finding and knowing God, then it would be self-evident that there might be a plane of intelligent existence below the human, wherein a creature still less endowed than the human, might be able to seek, find and know its Creator. If the one-half of the human race should seek, know and find their Creator, would it not point to the existence of the same possibility? We as mortals with mortal powers, can alone say, that God with infinite wisdom and in infinite love, has so endowed man and has so endowed woman, that the greatest possible number of each, shall seek, find, and know him, and yet the necessity for the creation of the human race be met.

When then we study human existence we must consider it as a whole, and must eliminate all individuality from it. It is true that individuality is an incident of it, a necessary incident, but it does not follow that it was the purpose for which human life was created. To grasp that purpose, we must consider human existence alone as links in that chain

of created existence, which manifests and proclaims the existence of God. When we thus take up the study of human life, what do we find? Unity of design in the creation of life, from the highest to the lowest, manifesting all the attributes which are revealed as being possessed by God. These are infinite power, infinite wisdom, infinite love. When we permit individuality of human existence to enter into this study, what do we find? Infinite power alone, coupled with lack of infinite wisdom, and absence of infinite love. From the standpoint of individuality these latter attributes are not and cannot be revealed. From such standpoint we cannot discover infinite wisdom in the wrecks of human lives which through unknown centuries have paved the way over which the race has traveled from its first to its present state. Human lives blighted by the choice of sin, by physical suffering through disease, pestilence, calamities and war, by mental anguish and by spiritual sorrow, or lost by what to us seems premature death, present to our backward view, these wrecks, even as would appear the bones of the fallen and the lost, piled to unmeasured depths. One man pursuing this way, ascends into spiritual life. Two women follow and enter with him into such estate. The many choose disobedience. Is it infinite wisdom that the human race be so created and endowed that the few be saved and the many be lost? Is it infinite love which saves the few out of the many, and bestows spiritual life and all of its joys upon them, and that condemns the many to spiritual death with all its endless sorrow? From

the viewpoint of individuality it is not possible that either of these attributes be manifested by and through the course of human life as experienced and observed by us all. From the viewpoint of the oneness of all created life, and the unity of all created intelligent existence, these attributes are declared by and may be seen in the condemnation and destruction of the many and the salvation of the few, of the human race. It is with this thought that we pass to the second subdivision of our theme.

Second. Individuality of life must ever be eliminated when we consider questions of moral government and God's infinite attributes. Individual life counts for nothing as against the welfare of all who possess life. This truth underlies all government, whether it be the moral government of God or the civil government of the state. If the welfare of the race, and through the race of all intelligent creatures, is to be subserved by the taking of my life in infancy, in youth, in early manhood, in the prime of life, or in old age, God so takes it. The same is true of every individual life in human existence. I am in earth-life today, because my continued existence here still best subserves the good of all. When the hour comes that the good of all shall be subserved by my death, in that hour I shall die. Life was not bestowed upon me for the joy it brings to me, and earthly existence will not be taken from me for any reasons pertaining to myself. I was created for the good of all. I will die for the good of all, even as infinite wisdom has foreordained and purposed.

As with me, so with every individual of the human race. We are created and we are taken to fulfill a race purpose, not an individual purpose of the Almighty. While it must be true that an individual purpose concerning us enters into and is a part of the race purpose, the race purpose must always be paramount, and the individual purpose subject thereto. Individually, we may liken our life to the life of a leaf of the forest. It springs, it matures, it falls. May be in the springing it is blighted, is torn, is consumed; may be in midsummer it falls; may be it reaches autumn sear, but always it has done its part as one of an innumerable multitude. So we as individuals live, and so we die, and our life counts no more in fulfilling the purpose for which the race was created, than does the one leaf in fulfilling the purpose for which the foliage of the forest was created. Infinite love knows no difference between the life of the leaf and the life of the individual of the human race. Each is created for a purpose and each dies when that purpose is fulfilled. By the same law are they created, by the same law they pass out of earthly existence.

Third. Individuality of life is an impossible conception when the laws of life are applied to aggregate life. Aggregate human life exists to meet the necessity which called it into being. Individual human life exists to meet the necessity which exists because of aggregate human life. It does not exist to meet the necessity which called aggregate human life into being. This is a distinction which means much and which must be kept in mind when apply-

ing the laws of life to human life, and when applying infinite attributes to individual life. If this distinction is not recognized and accepted, we affirm that it is impossible to reconcile the infinite attributes of God with the experiences of individual life, and it is also impossible to comprehend the laws of life. Throughout the existence of man on earth, the intelligent conscious soul has gone out towards its God in an exclamation and a prayer giving expression to this thought, Why do I exist? Why do I suffer? Life is a burden to many throughout its human existence. It is one long black hour of suffering, sorrow and discontent. Men curse the day which gave them birth, even as Job cursed the day which gave him birth. They pour out their soul in lamentations over that which human existence holds for them. They grow weary of life and seek oblivion through death. Such an one is asked to reconcile his sufferings, his sorrows, the bitterness of his human existence, with infinite love, which he knows in his heart is an attribute of his God, if he accepts the truth of God's existence. Such reconciliation is an impossibility if attempted individually. It can only be made when human life is considered in the aggregate. This failure to make such reconciliation with the individual life is one of the sorest trials to which the believing Christian is subjected. It sometimes proves fatal to belief.

Fourth. This leads us to the conclusion that while individuality of life is an experienced truth, it is also a delusion when we seek to apply it to the revelation and the laws of God our Father. It is a

truth because we experience and know it. I am distinct in my life from all other human life. My life is independent of all other human life. It always has been so, save that God used other human lives to bring mine into existence. This he did simply and solely as a method of creation. The act of my creation is God's act. The power which spoke my life into existence is God's power. The fact that he used human instrumentality detracts nothing from that power, neither does it transfer any of that power from the author to the instrument. The method by which life is bestowed is wholly independent of life itself. Man might have come into existence by any other method, had God so chosen, and the necessity for human life been equally met; for it is not the method of producing human life, but the existence of human life itself which meets the necessity for such life. Infinite wisdom designed the method for the reproduction of human life, after that life had once been created, to meet the necessity which grows out of the existence of human life, and not to meet the necessity for the existence of human life. When human life was bestowed it immediately brought into existence necessities which attach to its existence and which are independent of its origin. These necessities have been met through the laws of selection, heredity, and suffering. By and through these laws God makes the soul of man all it is or ever can be, and he makes it what it is through its own free choice between obedience and worship, or disobedience and refusal to worship. The necessities in the one case and in the other differ in

their origin. The necessity which brought human life with human endowment into existence, rests upon and springs from the welfare and happiness of all created intelligences above the human race. The necessities which govern individuality in the human race, spring from and rest upon the existence of the human race itself. The former are and must forever be in harmony with the infinite attributes of God. The latter must be consistent with the former alone and through them alone must be harmonized with such infinite attributes.

These thoughts bring us face to face with the problems of our relation as individuals to God the Creator of the human race. These are problems which have vexed the righteous soul from the beginning of conscious accountability. To understand why God gives suffering to one and joy to another; gives long life to one and cuts another off in infancy, in childhood, or in the vigor of middle age, has been the intense desire and the unceasing effort of the good and the pure in all ages of the world. The cup of human misery is an overflowing cup to a large portion of the human kind. It is drunk by the good, the pure, the righteous, and it is also drunk by the impure, the evil and the unrighteous. The fact of the soul's obedience or of its disobedience appears to have no effect upon this draught which is forced upon the unwilling recipient. I have said that obedience and disobedience appear to have no effect upon such suffering. Let us ask the question, right here, fairly and unreservedly, Have they any such effect? Let us answer this question as fairly

and unreservedly, and say: They have not. This then presents for our consideration this proposition. Human misery, sorrow and suffering, in so far as they are not the result of individual crime, are not dependent upon or affected by the obedience or the disobedience of the soul to its God. They come whether the soul is obedient or is disobedient. They continue until they have served the purposes for which they were sent, whether the suffering soul is obedient or is disobedient. They are not a punishment for disobedience, and their opposites, health, prosperity and contentment, are not a reward for obedience.

Rewards and punishments do not exist in the government of God. Effects following causes, by fixed and changeless laws, do exist in God's government; but human misery, sorrow and suffering, are not such effects, save only as they may be the result of individual crime. Why then do they come to the righteous and to the unrighteous alike? To meet the necessities that spring from the creation of the human race, even as that creation itself met and fulfilled a pre-existing necessity, compelling it. Why human misery, sorrow and suffering are necessities springing from the creation and existence of the human race upon the human plane of existence, has been fully considered, and in this connection we have nothing to do but to accept them as facts known to us all. Why then does one individual suffer and not another? This is the crucial question which tries the strength of the believing, the loving, the obedient soul. Can we answer it? We

can, according to the knowledge which God has given us.

In answering it we will follow the following line of thought.

First. The life of the individual is inseparable from the life of the human race as a whole, when we seek to answer this question.

Second. Individuality of existence is therefore eliminated from all thoughts bearing upon this subject, and it resolves itself into an inquiry as to why suffering exists at all.

Third. Admitting the necessity for human suffering and eliminating individuality of life from the consideration it resolves itself into this proposition: Human life falls to man, as sub-human life falls to the brute; as vegetable life falls to the vegetable kingdom; as inanimate existence falls to inanimate matter. The law of creation and the law of being, is one and the same to each.

First. When we consider human misery, sorrow and suffering there is no individuality of life. We as individuals are simply bearing a part of a common load, which of necessity has been placed upon the human race to be borne. How then is this common load distributed? Is it by law, as effect following cause, by chance, or by the purpose of God? It is not by law, save as the law of necessity places the burden upon the human race. It is not by chance, because there is no chance in the government of God. It is therefore by the purpose of God, directly and unqualifiedly. What can we then say of the purpose of God in predestinating and

foreordaining some individuals to suffering, sorrow and misery, and other individuals to their opposites, during human existence? Is it consistent and harmonious with the attribute of infinite love? When the individual life of the sufferer is considered as in direct relationship with God, it is irreconcilable with such attribute and it becomes inexplicable.

When the individual life of the sufferer is considered in its relation with human life as a whole, and then human life as a whole in its relation with God the Creator of it, it is reconcilable and harmonious with the attribute of infinite love.

We have seen that the creation of the human race met and fulfilled a pre-existing necessity for such creation. We have also seen that the creation of the human race, itself created the necessity for human suffering, sorrow and misery. With infinite wisdom and in infinite love God has distributed this burden of suffering, sorrow and misery, which the necessities of its own existence places upon the human race, among the individuals of that race, where it will yield the largest results in good to the greatest number of souls. In doing this the individual cannot enter into the purpose of God; the ultimate results and the good of all creatures, must so enter. The line between individual human life and life as a whole or as a race is thus sharply drawn. Let us dwell upon this thought until we comprehend it and have it fairly fixed in our minds, for it is the key that unlocks the mystery of human suffering, sorrow and misery, and reconciles them with the attribute of infinite love. While it is true that I am an indi-

vidual of the human race and as such have an absolutely distinct and separate existence from all other creatures, yet life has not been bestowed upon me as an individual in any sense whatever. I have no individuality of relationship when it comes to my relationship with God. I have no claims upon God as an individual creature. I have a claim upon God as one of a race of creatures which claim is common to the race as such. I can not segregate myself and deal directly with my Creator. I have no claim upon him as an individual. I have the common claim of all humanity upon him, that and nothing more. In bestowing life upon me God entered into no implied covenant or obligation with me as an individual. It is not so with that aggregate individuality constituting the human race; with such he is in covenant relationship, and is under such obligations as are implied by his own infinite attributes. Individually I can claim such covenants and bring myself within such obligations alone through my race as an aggregate whole. This is the thought that I wish to impress: As an individual my only claim upon my Creator is through my race; I have no claims upon him which are separate from such race claims or which are separate and distinct from the claims of all other individuals of the race. From this the truth becomes apparent that God's dealings with the individual do not constitute an expression of infinite love, but that his dealings with the entire race as a whole do constitute such expression.

Second. It follows therefore that individuality of existence is eliminated from all inquiries of this

kind and they resolve themselves into the inquiry as to why human suffering, sorrow and misery exist at all. This inquiry we have disposed of according to the light, knowledge and understanding which we possess and we can add no more thereto.

Third. We therefore pass to the third and last thought outlined, which is: Admitting the necessity for human suffering and eliminating individuality of life from its consideration, it resolves itself into this proposition: Human life comes to man as sub-human life comes to the brute; as vegetable life comes to the vegetable kingdom; as inanimate existence comes to inanimate matter; the law of creation and the law of being are one and the same in each case.

Life in kind is the basis for the consideration of all concerning life. By life in kind, we mean, there is one life which is the life of man, another which is the life of the brute, another which is the life of the bird, another of fishes, another of insects throughout their innumerable varieties. Each kind of life is distinctive and is separate from all other kinds of life. To all these kinds of life we can apply the laws of life and the infinite attributes of the Creator and find nothing in conflict between them. This we cannot do when we individualize any one of these kinds of life and then seek to apply these laws and these attributes to such individual. Take any one variety or kind of life and attempt this and what have we? One individual suffers, another escapes suffering; one individual finds food in abundance, another perishes for lack of food; one indi-

vidual suffers or dies in order that another individual of the same or of a different order of life, be brought into life or be sustained in life, while another escapes such suffering and death. There is not one kind of life known to man, from his own down to the lowest microscopic forms of existence discernible, wherein this truth is not manifested. What does this fact alone teach us? That it is a law of life, common to all life known to us, that individuality of existence is subordinated to and inseparably connected with the aggregate existence to which it belongs. When this law is applied to human existence, man being a rational creature, it means this, that man cannot separate his individual existence from aggregate human existence, and hold God accountable to himself as such individual. This Job tried to do, and in this Job failed as all others must likewise fail.

Man's life therefore comes to the individual human being as a part of an aggregate human existence and it is as a part of such aggregate whole that he bears his burden of suffering, sorrow and misery, or seizes upon and delights in their opposites. Whatever of suffering, sorrow and misery is necessitated because of human existence, must be borne by some individuals possessing such existence. It is not possible that all should bear these in equal proportions, for if all were thus afflicted then it would be impossible for the race to fulfill the purposes for which it was created. The ends of human existence could not be met if all human beings were thus afflicted, neither could such ends be met if no human being

suffered more than what would be his average lot. The individual must suffer as an individual for the good of all. This law of creation, this law of life, is stamped upon all life. Human life is not an exception. It is the highest expression of one common law of all life.

We therefore can plainly and properly draw one conclusion from what we see and know of all life. It is this: The individual suffers and dies to fulfill a burden placed upon the aggregate life of which the individual life is a part. We will illustrate this. It is the burden placed upon one kind of animal life to sustain and perpetuate another kind of animal life. This it does by certain individuals possessing such life, dying as a prey to individuals possessing the other kind of life. Now all individuals of the first order cannot thus suffer and die, else the order itself would become extinct and fail to fulfill one of the purposes of its creation. Hence some individuals of the orders fall a prey, suffer, and die, while other individuals of the order escape this fate and live out the full measure of their natural life, enjoying all that such life contains for them. It does not occur to humanity to charge God with partiality towards the individuals of this order, yet such a charge would lie against infinite love, as surely and certainly in its dealings with the lower orders of life as with man, for a love that is infinite can know no distinction between the highest and the lowest of creatures. The individual of this lower order which thus suffers torture, terror, physical pain, and surrenders its life, suffers and surrenders

all that any human creature can be called upon to suffer and surrender. It suffers all the terror that is possible to it; all the pain that is possible for it to suffer; and surrenders all the pleasure that life brings to it. This is all that man can do. An intelligent human creature can not apply the truth of infinite love to these several individuals of this lower order of life and find consistency. An intelligent human creature can apply the truth of infinite love to the order of life to which these individuals belong, in its relation with all other orders of life both above and below it, and find consistency. That which is true of the individuals of this lower order, is true of the individuals of the human order of life. We might multiply this illustration by hundreds and by thousands. They are about us in our daily life from our infancy to our death. They enter into that which we daily eat; that which we daily do; that which we daily see. We as one order of life live upon and are sustained by individuals of other orders. We inflict terror, pain and death upon individuals of other orders, not upon all individuals of other orders, but upon certain ones only. We hesitate not to take life. We assert it as a natural right to do so. So it is, and if we doubt this right all we have to do to be confirmed in its truth is to look into Nature about us and see the law under which that right exists, stamped upon and revealed by all creation. This is so clear that but few hesitate concerning it. We forget that the life of the smallest and of the lowest of creatures is as precious in the sight of our infinite Creator as is the life of man, and that the lowest

life is created under, sustained by, and taken because of the same laws of creation, of life, and of death, as those under which man was created, now lives and must die. God's laws are not only changeless, but they are universal in their application. If therefore we may deduce a law from what we see and know of the lower orders of life about us, we may with full assurance and safety apply that same law to the human race. God takes the life of man as we take the life of the orders beneath us and subject to our dominion and control; and as one order below us takes the life of another order below us; it is all done under one and the same law.

CHAPTER V.

THE WAY OF MAN'S LIFE ON EARTH.—HEREDITY AND ENVIRONMENT.—THE SOUL'S CONCEPTION OF GOD.

The way of man's life on earth is a way of mystery. This thought is one of deepest interest to all who seek the truths which lie hidden or partially hidden about them in God's physical and moral universe. Between the two days upon which the last two sentences were respectively penned, a life has gone out and a nation mourns. I could almost say a world mourns, for in every land where Wm. McKinley was known as the director of a nation's mighty power, there is sincere sorrow as I pen these words. The mystery of the way of life is intensified by his death, which presents this thought so forcibly that it cannot escape the consideration of the thoughtful. I cannot refrain from this allusion to a passing event so deeply impressed upon the thought of the world at this hour, and if this event shall serve to render clearer to myself the thoughts which I shall pen this hour, may it not serve likewise to render them clearer to those who shall read them in future years? Life is not of our own seeking or of our own getting. It is forced upon us. We either receive it gladly and thank our Creator for the gift to us or we receive it sullenly and curse the day upon which we were born. There is no medium sentiment between these two extremes. We

are not indifferent to life. We either love it or we hate it. We either cling to it or we wish to flee from it. During certain moments or hours or days we may claim indifference; that we neither love life nor hate it, neither cling to it nor desire to escape it, but such claims and feelings if they do exist are merely transitory and are not settled convictions of the soul. These come with broadened experiences, more matured thought and as final conclusions of the soul. They depend upon the soul's choice between obedience and disobedience, between worship and the withholding of worship.

We assert that no soul which seeks obedience and worship is either indifferent to its own life or hates its own life. We further assert that no soul which withholds obedience and worship either clings to or loves its own life. For our race there can be no mean between these two extremes of sentiment. All created intelligent beings will therefore be finally divided into two classes; the one, grateful for, clinging to and loving its own life; the other, ungrateful for, seeking to escape and hating its own life. As we had no part in the bestowal of our own life, neither can we ever escape from or destroy it. We are born to live forever. This truth but deepens the mystery which shadows the way of man's life. What we have asserted are truths which we believe will be accepted because of what we know concerning our own lives and of what we observe concerning the lives of those about us. The problem of human life is therefore presented to us about in this form: By the will and fiat of our Creator life is bestowed upon

a race of beings which we call human, and of which race we are individual members. Neither as a race nor as individuals have we had any power to stay, or choose in the matter of the bestowal of this gift. We are the helpless and unconscious recipients of that which our Creator bestows upon us. This is true of not merely the simple fact of life, but it is equally true of the environment by which that life is surrounded and of the inherited characteristics which come with it and are a part of it. Experience, observation and revelation unite in establishing the truth that this human life in its human state contains more of sorrow than it does of joy. Revelation confirms this truth as applied to an endless spiritual existence. Throughout the eternity to come, comparatively few of the human race will love the life which is theirs, which is their very selves, and comparatively many will hate that same life and long to escape it.

This being the problem of life presented, the mystery is to find the law and the purpose which leads the few into the one class and the many into the other class, and then to reconcile this law and this purpose with the truth of God's infinite and equal love for all his creatures. Second only to this deepest mystery is that other one which attaches to the way of the life of the individual in his human state. These two problems comprise that which is most mysterious in our existence and we will take them up in their order.

The truth that the sorrow connected with human existence, both here and hereafter, exceeds the joy,

need not be further discussed. It will be accepted by the great majority, either from personal experience, from observation or from revelation. Then the thought presented is, Why was the human race created? Why is it continued through so many ages of ever increasing births? The only answer to these inquiries that can satisfy the soul of man is the one which has heretofore been given in these writings. The creation of the human race was a necessity in order that the Creator might reveal himself to his intelligent creatures by and through a perfect work of creation. Such revelation was itself a necessity in order that the happiness of these same creatures might be perpetuated, established and forever confirmed to them. To do this all degrees or planes of intelligent existence and of non-intelligent existence, which were capable of manifesting life, must so manifest and declare it. Such perfection of the creative work was attained by the creation of man and of woman, as morally responsible intelligent beings.

Thus the creative work was finished. The revelation of God to his intelligent creatures was not yet perfected. This required the working out of the destiny of the human race through the course of its human existence. When this shall have been accomplished, then shall that revelation itself become perfect. The purpose and the necessity which brought the human race into existence will then be fulfilled and met. If it be true that an arch-angel rebelled and fell through the sin of disobedience and that the one-half of the angelic host followed

his leadership into rebellion and sin, then may we reasonably accept this further truth, that it was possible that intelligent beings might be created upon a still lower plane than that of angelic life and that some individuals of such creation would choose to seek and would choose to obey their Creator. As long as this truth existed and the human race remained uncreated the work of creation remained imperfect and as such it could not declare and reveal a perfect and infinite Creator. This is the necessity and this the purpose which brought the human race into existence as intelligent and morally responsible creatures. The same law, the same necessity, the same purpose which brought the human race into being, that a perfect work of creation might declare and reveal a perfect and an infinite Creator to super-human intelligences, brought into being all sub-human life, that this same truth might be declared and revealed to all human beings who will receive and accept the revelation. Human beings were and are created therefore not for the joy or the sorrow which must come to them as individuals; not for the worship which they render unto their Creator; not for the pleasure of their Creator, for God cannot delight in suffering, sorrow and sin; but to establish and forever confirm the happiness of all creatures, of whatever state and degree of intelligence their existence may be, who know their Creator, and who obey and worship him. It were better that many should suffer and sorrow and perish in spiritual death, than that all intelligent creatures, or that all of any one degree of intelligence should

enter into spiritual death through doubt of their Creator's existence, leading them into disobedience and sin. Such doubt certainly did exist and certainly would have continued to exist but for the creation of the human race with its endowments.

We have thus found the law and the purpose which leads the many into the choice of disobedience and spiritual death and the few into the choice of obedience and spiritual life. Now can we harmonize this law and this purpose with the equal and infinite love of God towards all his creatures? Let us consider then this thought.

Life which is sub-human has been created for the benefit of the human race. Whether it has also been created for the benefit of any super-human beings, we need not consider. To man, this sub-human life is a part of an infinite revelation of God as his Creator. Man cannot comprehend the infinity of this revelation, but he can comprehend that span of it which he can grasp within his limited powers and this is sufficient to reveal God to him as a perfect Creator, according to his power of comprehending perfection. This is all that any degree of intelligence below the infinite can do. What then do we find among the orders of life below our own? One is created for another, and each is endowed according to the purpose of its creation. One order of life becomes food to sustain and perpetuate another order of life. Individuals of one order cease to live in order that individuals of another order may continue to live. The individuals of the one order endure physical suffering,

the agony of torturing fear and finally surrender their lives to the individuals of the other order. Does God love the devouring animal more, and the innocent, terrorized, tortured and finally devoured animal the less? No one could or would assert this to be the truth. God's love for all his creatures is equal, being infinite, and not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our heavenly Father's notice. Why then does the one devour and the other yield up life? The only answer is, To meet the necessity for the manifestation of life upon the planes of life requiring such manifestation. Such illustrations can be drawn, almost without number, from the whole range of life below the human plane. These facts teach us this truth, that no order of life or no individual of any order of life, is created for itself alone. Each order and each individual of all orders are created in reference to other orders and to individuals of the same or of other orders. Not one individual creature below man has an existence which is independent of the existence of other individuals of the same or of other orders. The whole creation of sub-human life is a perfect work of creation, or rather is a subdivision of an entire perfect work of creation, in which each individual of every order of life bears some relation either intimate or remote to every other individual of all other orders. The omission of one order would result in the destruction of another order. In this subdivision of creation which we are considering, each individual of every order fulfills a purpose and performs a duty which bears directly upon the welfare

and the perpetuation of all the orders, and of all the other individuals having life within this subdivision. That duty may be the surrendering of its own life, either with or without suffering, torture and fear. In fulfilling this duty it but fulfills the purpose of God in its creation as an individual. We recognize all this as natural and right and as manifesting nothing in conflict with the infinite attributes of our Creator. When the same truths and facts are applied to the human race, we recoil from the acceptance of them and may even charge the Almighty with manifesting a greater love for one individual than for another, forgetful that infinite love can make no distinction between creatures whether they be the humblest or the highest. Can we not comprehend from these illustrations the necessity and the law of our creation as intelligent human beings? Any law and any necessity which can be rightly applied to any one subdivision of God's creation must be applied to that entire creation, and must include and embrace every individual of every order of that creation.

We come now to the second thought, the mystery of the way of the life of the individual in its human state. We have found the necessity which led to the creation of the human race, as well as the necessity which gave to it that degree of intelligence with which it is endowed, and we have now to harmonize the way of the life of the individual with these two necessities. This is not an easy thing to do, but God has given to us the power to comprehend that there is such harmony if we will but make

the effort to comprehend it. The first of these necessities placed man on a plane of intelligent existence, below angelic existence and above the non-intelligent existence of other animal life. The second necessity placed man's intelligence so low that there could be no further subdivision of an intelligent existence between man's and the highest non-intelligent existence of animal life. In truth man himself was once a non-intelligent animal, irresponsible morally, and therefore incapable of sin. When man emerged from this state, through the Adamic race into a state of moral accountability, and when woman had been created subdividing and occupying the span of possible intelligent existence lying between that of man thus made morally accountable, and of angelic existence, then it was that God's creative work became complete and perfect. Intelligence and intelligent existence as I here use these terms in no sense apply to a comprehension of physical laws or to the powers of the creature to comprehend these laws. This is intelligence in its common and restricted sense, applicable exclusively to human existence. It is a power and an endowment which is wholly human and alone possible in human existence. Such intelligence ceases with human existence because of the soul's inability to further use those powers which bring such knowledge to it. Intelligence and intelligent existence in the broader sense as herein used, mean, the power of the creature to know and to comprehend its Creator. This power varies from the feeblest possible manifestation of it in man to the highest possible

manifestation of it in the highest creature. This power and the exercise of it constitute intelligent existence and are the measure of that existence. Like all other powers of the soul it is capable of development and is developed according to the use made of it. It is manifest even to us, that no creature with this power more rudimentary than it is in man would ever seek and find its Creator. It is also manifest to us that comparatively few men do this. It is equally manifest to us that a larger number of women than of men do this. We are therefore prepared to accept the following general assertion based upon these truths, namely: The human race must necessarily sink into spiritual darkness, to a much greater extent, than rise into spiritual life; the many must turn from their Creator and sink into spiritual death; the few must turn to their Creator, seek him, find him, and rise into spiritual life. Of necessity man was created for this destiny and he fulfills it.

What are the causes which turn the few into the way of spiritual life and leave the many to sink into spiritual death? They all rest upon the free choice of the individual soul. Such choice rests upon the character of the individual soul. The same general character is common to all men and to all women, respectively, but individual character is also modified by causes uncontrolled by man. Among these are heredity and environment. These are controlled by God; heredity, absolutely, and environment primarily, subject to modification by man. These God uses to save all that are saved. These

causes divert the current of the soul's life, usually in its earliest course, and cause it to flow towards spiritual light and spiritual life, or away from these into spiritual death. Following up the thought the inquiry becomes, Why does God bestow these causes upon the few and not upon all? The answer is that the necessity imposed upon him by the creation of innumerable beings higher than man holds him back therefrom. To save the entire human race would be to defeat the very necessity and purpose of its creation. To save the one-half of the human race would do the same thing. What proportion of the human race may be thus saved without defeating such necessity and purpose, we know not, but we do know that it is a small proportion, for Christ so declared in words which cannot be mistaken. God to fulfill this necessity and purpose created in Adam a new power, the power to know his Creator. He created in Eve the same power, intensified. These powers were an absolutely new creation, a new endowment bestowed upon human beings. They alone of all human beings then existing upon the earth, possessed these powers. To these powers were added environment, and a new race, morally responsible, came into existence. Heredity and environment thereafter became the instruments of God in perpetuating spiritual truth among human beings. The moving finger of God has written his will concerning the human race in these characters, from the creation of Adam and Eve to this hour and will continue so to write it until the end of time. The human race to the

utmost soul that this necessity will permit, is being saved by the infinite power of an infinitely loving God. This we may surely assert and may positively know. When all this has been admitted as truth, the question then becomes: By what rule of justice and infinite love is it that the few are selected for salvation and the many for destruction? Is this question capable of answer? It is partially so, but not wholly. Man in his weakness may not presume to know the secrets of the Almighty, except to the extent that the Almighty has revealed them to him. Let us seek, then, revelation upon this question. God's will is, not that all men should be saved, but that few men should be saved. The proof that such is God's will is the fact that such is the result of the creation and the perpetuation of the human race. To deny this assertion is to deny the possession of infinite attributes by God. Concerning this question there is no room for controversy. Infinite attributes could have saved all men if God had so willed. Let us examine this thought closely. To have saved all men from sin would have necessitated the taking from man, as now created, self-will and freedom of action. Mankind could thus have been saved from sin, but no soul thus saved could have ever entered heaven. The reason for this is that the spiritual life, called heaven, is an effect following a distinct and positive cause, which cause is the absolute submission and subjection of the soul's own free will, to the revealed will of its Creator. An effect cannot be created without the creation also of the cause pro-

dueing it. This, Omnipotence cannot do because it is self-contradictory to either assert it or to think of it as possible. Man's choice of the submission and the subjection of his own will to the revealed will of his Creator, depends wholly upon the clearness of his comprehension of his Creator's existence. This latter is governed by the degree of his intelligence, his spiritual intelligence. In this thought we have the key to the argument which follows.

The higher the plane of intelligence upon which a distinctive order of beings is created, the larger is the proportion of such order of beings which will freely choose the submission and subjection of their own wills to the revealed will of their Creator, and the smaller the proportion which will refuse such submission and subjection. We have seen that the descending planes or degrees of intelligence, governing in the creation of intelligent creatures, ended with the creation of man upon the lowest plane and with the most limited degree of intelligence. Therefore it follows that so much the larger proportion of the human race must choose disobedience as will prove the impossibility of creating a still lower order of beings than the human order, with intelligence sufficient to enable any one individual of such lower order to seek, to find and to know its Creator. We ourselves can comprehend that the creation of such lower order is an impossibility. This is demonstrated to us by the choice of the vast majority of the human race, which appears to us to be a refusal to submit and subject their own wills wholly to the revealed will of their Creator. It

being thus an impossibility that God should save from the effects of disobedience more than a small proportion of the entire accountable human race, he has chosen for such salvation those who are most powerfully influenced by heredity and environment. That is to say, that from a starting point on a plane of spiritual intelligence so low that if left to uninfluenced choice no single human soul would have chosen and maintained obedience and submission, God has by the use of environment and heredity, led to the free choice of obedience and submission, every human soul which it has been possible to reach. Remember, that these two means, environment and heredity, are all the means whereby God can possibly influence the soul of man to choose submission and obedience. It is only after voluntary submission and purposed obediencee that God's Holy Spirit can reach, can aid, can enlighten, the soul of man. Conviction of sin cannot come from God's Holy Spirit. That must come from the soul itself by the voluntary use of its own spiritual powers. Otherwise an omnipotent God would become chargeable for a failure to convict every human creature of sin in so powerful a manner as to lead him to seek his Creator through obedience and submission. This is a power which God does not and cannot use. It is without the limits of the office of his Holy Spirit. Heredity is of God and we can surely assert that he uses this means to the utmost limit of the power and law of heredity in bringing souls to himself. Environment is of God primarily, but subject to modifications by

man, and for the use of this means God is dependent upon the will and act of man in bringing about such modifications. This thought, this truth, should be a powerful incentive to the submissive and obedient soul in its efforts to cast about the benighted and disobedient of earth that environment which will aid most powerfully in leading to obedience and submission. It is thus that God works and has worked from the beginning of the Adamic race and will continue to work until the end of human life upon the earth, for the submission and obedience of every human soul. Can we in our ignorance and weakness question the way of the Almighty? Let us rather thank and praise him for the use of these means which have led us individually into acceptance, submission and obedience, according to the light which he has bestowed upon us, and do all within our power to aid our heavenly Father's cause through the influences of human environment, by the use of the powers, the means and the opportunities, which he has bestowed upon us, and as he through his Holy Spirit guides us.

Whatever the soul considers perfect, that is God. No creature acknowledging God admits any imperfection in him. Such admission would destroy the idea of God and would be unthinkable. It therefore follows that God is to each soul, the highest ideal of perfection of which it has the power to conceive. Is this conception the same in all? It is not, and cannot possibly be made so. My ideal of perfection varies from your ideal of perfection, and both these vary from all others. It therefore fol-

solution of this mystery and a comprehension of the being and the attributes of God, is the foundation of all the joy which eternity can contain for the soul of man. All the delights of spiritual life, of heaven, are incident to and dependent upon such growth. He who comprehends and accepts this truth has within it a revelation to himself of what heaven is and shall forever be.

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CHAPTER VI.

DEATH.—INTELLECTUAL POWER ANTAGONISTIC TO SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE.—SPIRITUAL EXISTENCE.

Death is a theme which is never pleasant to the living. It is something we must all meet and we should all seek to understand it. I purpose using plain language, harsh as it may seem, and to treat of human death simply as an effect of human life. Death is sad alone to the living. It is not sad for those who have passed through it, whatever their spiritual state may be. The life which is wholly spiritual is superior to the life which is part spiritual and part physical. Death can add nothing to the sinner's state of willful disobedience to God, neither can it add anything to the saint's unfaltering obedience to God. Death does not change the spiritual state of the soul. For all accountable human beings heaven begins upon the earth, as the effect of the willful and loving obedience of the soul, or hell begins upon the earth as the effect of the willful disobedience of the soul. Death neither ushers the soul into heaven nor into hell. It has no effect whatever upon the soul's spiritual state. Death is the ending of one state or condition of life, but it is not the beginning of another. Death eliminates physical conditions and physical powers from the soul's life. It adds nothing to what the soul now possesses. It is true that the state of the

soul after death is conducive to the development of powers which it now possesses in an undeveloped condition. Deprived by death of its physical powers the soul turns to its spiritual powers, exerts them, develops them, and receives all subsequent knowledge through them. This it cannot do in human life because herein the physical powers are paramount and hold the spiritual powers in abeyance. Death therefore leaves the soul with life, and with the vigorous use of all the powers it possessed in its human state, the use of which is independent of physical conditions. These powers are quickened because of the change and of the more active use made of them. To replace all the physical senses which the soul possesses in its physical state, it finds itself possessed of spiritual powers in an undeveloped state. Such powers it proceeds to develop by bringing them into immediate and continuous use. Such use is productive of rapid development. The soul thus soon finds itself equipped with spiritual powers suited to its spiritual state and superior to those which perished with its physical body.

First. Death is a change necessitated by the soul's dual state of existence.

Second. Death is a law of physical existence, introduced with the creation of such existence and inseparable from it.

Third. Death is the end of a state of existence which can never return to the soul. There can be no resurrection of the physical body.

The spiritual can alone exist without change. The physical is ever changing. The first proposition I cannot prove. The second is proven by everything around us and by ourselves. That which we can see so clearly and so universally, we must accept as a law of physical creation. Accepting it as a law we must then admit that there are no exceptions to that law. This law of change is written upon everything which is physical, no matter how ethereal or how dense is its substance. Change awaits all that which has form or substance or physical quality. Change is death, death is change; the terms are synonymous. The human soul is endowed with the power to take up, appropriate and use portions of the physical creation. It takes them subject to this law of change, this law of death. The physical substance which the soul thus appropriates for its uses, is changing, is dying, continuously, but it still retains the power to take up and appropriate other material substance to replace the dying matter of which it is being deprived. This process goes on until the period arrives when this power to take up and appropriate matter has run its course and ceases to perform its functions. The change goes on, and physical death is the result. Such is the natural course of life and the natural cause of death. Added to this cause are many others which interfere with and destroy this power of the soul to take up and appropriate new matter to replace the dying matter before appropriated. It follows therefore that death is simply and solely the passing of the soul from the matter which it

has thus taken up and appropriated because of the failure of this power to longer take up and appropriate new matter. Such failure may be from any one of almost innumerable causes. This power of the soul can only act through an intricate combination of physical machinery, and whatever interferes with and stops any part of that machinery, destroys the power, and death ensues. The soul thus loses its hold upon matter and passes forever from the realm of matter into the realm of spirit. This power once destroyed, is forever gone. It has served the purpose of its creation, it has ceased to exist.

Second. Death is a law of physical existence, introduced with the creation of such existence and inseparable from it.

To establish this assertion is not as easy as it is to make it. We draw back from the fact of death and from the necessity which compels it. Death is change, change is death. If we will accept this assertion and remember it, we will comprehend more readily the thoughts which follow. The law of change is written upon everything material. This will neither be denied or doubted by anyone. It is so universal and so plain that it must be accepted by all. If we can then make it plain that change is death, the mystery of death disappears. Change means disintegration or growth. Either implies and embodies the term death, for growth necessitates the death of the old as certainly as does decay. In growth the new is built up out of the elements of the old, and the change which releases these elements of the old and enables the new to appropriate them

is synonymous with the term death. In growth, therefore, death is involved. If we can accept this truth we can accept the kindred truth that the changes necessitated by decay are also synonymous with death. In the assertion and the acceptance of these truths is laid the proper foundation for a study and an understanding of the death of the human body. The human body is neither more nor less than an aggregation and combination of material elements taken up and appropriated by that power of the soul to which I have referred, and arranged, associated and distributed as required in the building up of a physical body. This body becomes both the abiding place and the obedient servant of the soul. Whatever is added to that body from day to day is added by the exercise of the same powers of the soul which enabled it to assemble and combine, arrange and appropriate, the material elements which entered into its original body. We may classify all these powers under one head and call it the power of growth. A human soul is created; along with other powers, it is endowed with the power of growth. It is the office of this power to construct and to maintain a human body. It is a gift from the Creator, inseparable from and necessary to, the gift of human life. It is a power which pertains to human existence and not to spiritual existence. It ceases with the soul's physical existence the same as all other powers which require a material creation for their manifestation and use, such as sight, hearing, tasting, smelling, feeling, and the power of producing

sound. All these powers end with the soul's physical existence. Natural death is therefore nothing other than the decline and passing away of a transient power of the soul, the power of growth, which power is bestowed upon the soul for use during its physical existence, and marks the period of such existence. A kindred power is bestowed upon every form of life which is manifested through a material creation, whether such life be animal or vegetable. All created life is from God direct, and is of God a part, whether it be of the highest or of the lowest form in which life is manifested. This is not asserting that God is not also distinct from and superior to all created life, in his personality and endowments. I speak of natural death, for among men, as among all the forms of lower manifested life, there are innumerable methods whereby this power of growth is interfered with and destroyed, thus producing death from what we would call unnatural causes.

Third. Death is the end of a state of existence which can never return to the soul. There can be no resurrection of the body. There can be a resurrection of a spiritual existence. There is such a resurrection, immediately following human death. This Jesus, the Christ, taught. This Jesus, the Christ, exemplified. He arose from a human death into a spiritual existence, and therein appeared unto his disciples, not in body but in spirit. This is a subject not properly discussed here and it is only referred to for the purpose of harmonizing this argument with future assertions. The

human body goes the way of all material substance. It changes through decay and is resolved into the elements from which it was drawn. It has served the soul as long as it could be of service to it, and is no more to it thereafter than is the earth or the water which envelops it. Death is not a dread monster, come to destroy. Death is a loving messenger come to unchain the fettered soul and to usher it out of a limited into an unlimited existence. Death to the human existence is birth into an unfettered spiritual existence. Not that this spiritual existence was not before death a possession of the soul, but with fettered, limited, and undeveloped powers alone.

Human intellect, or what we might call the wisdom of a man, is ever warring with his own soul in its efforts to find its God. This is true of all men everywhere. It is as true of you and of me as it was true of Job. The less of human intellect we have, the less of earthly wisdom we have, the better it is for the soul when it comes to seek its God. We make this statement as a general one, and yet there are limitations which must go with it. Some degree of human intellect is necessary in order to constitute man a morally responsible being. The idiot has no moral responsibility. The less the intellect, the less the moral responsibility. The greater the intellect the greater the moral responsibility, and yet the harder is it for the soul to grasp the truth of God's revelation of himself, and to come into a conscious knowledge of God's existence. This is the reason for our assertion that the

intellect of a man wars against his own soul in its efforts to find its God. In proof of the assertion we present the following thoughts:

First. Our own experience and our own observation are in line with this assertion.

Second. Intellect is masterful in its character and is not submissive. It dominates but will not serve.

Third. Intellect takes from the soul that feeling of dependence which is essential to a proper and a successful search after God.

First. As to our own experience and our own observation. The most ignorant are the most devout, where they seek obedience at all. This is true the world over, and there are perhaps few of us who have not observed it as a truth. No questions of doubt disturb them. They accept the figures by and through which the revelations of truth are given to man, as the literal truth itself, and are satisfied therewith. They possess a certainty of knowledge which no man of broader intellectual power can ever hope to possess during earthly existence. Doubt is the origin of all sin, therefore having no doubt, they do not sin. They may do many things which they of broader intellect could not do without sin, but to them it is not sin, because no purpose of disobedience accompanies the act. Spiritually considered, ignorance is bliss. Ignorance is a temporary gain to the soul. But from this we must not argue that intellectual efforts should be suppressed, discouraged, or even lessened. Intellect is a necessity to human

life and to human development in earth. Intellect is the crown which raises man above the brute and which makes him a morally responsible creature. Without it man would be a brute, with it he may enter heaven. The assertion and the argument are that while intellect is a necessity to man's continued existence upon the earth, and its possession in some degree a necessity to his moral accountability, yet the possession of it is a hindrance to the acquisition of spiritual knowledge through the exercise of the spiritual powers of the soul, and such hindrance is in direct ratio to the development of the intellectual powers. The two classes of powers are antagonistic. The one can comprehend and accept nothing which is not material. The other can know nothing which is material.

This brings us to our second assertion, That intellect is masterful in its character and not submissive; it dominates, but will not serve. If this was not true, the intellectual powers could not serve the purpose of their creation. Their office is to dominate matter; to bring it under subjection to man; to discover its laws and to apply these laws for the benefit of man. This intellect has done for man and is doing for him, to a degree which causes those of this age to marvel at its power. This cannot be said of the soul's spiritual powers. They can take cognizance alone of the truths which pertain unto the spiritual world. The world of matter is unknown to the world of spirit, therefore the soul's spiritual powers can comprehend nothing material,

any more than the soul's intellectual powers can comprehend truths wholly spiritual.

Third. Intellect takes from the soul that feeling of dependence which is essential to a proper and successful search after God. The soul which feels no dependence upon God can never find him. Dependence upon him and a yearning after him are essential to the acceptance by the soul of the spiritual truth that God exists. The acceptance of this spiritual truth is the foundation of our relationship with him as redeemed children, through Christ, our Saviour. The soul may accept the intellectual truth that there is a God, but the acceptance of such intellectual truth cannot become the foundation of any new relationship with God. Intellectual truth cannot support a spiritual relation. The world is full of effort along this line and all such effort is in vain. Spiritual truth can alone be received through the soul's spiritual powers. Spiritual truth cannot be received through the soul's intellectual powers. It is probably for this reason that when the intellect is great and the intellectual powers strongly dominant over the spiritual powers, that a feeling of independence and self-sufficiency is produced, which greatly hinders, or may be entirely bars, a successful search after the spiritual knowledge of our Creator's existence. There is a vast difference between seeking to know God intellectually, and seeking to know him spiritually. The soul may accept the truth that there is a God, through the knowledge which comes to it by the use of some one or more of its five physical senses. Such acceptance is intellectual

only and does not bring the soul into any new relationship with God. God must be revealed to the soul spiritually before it does or can enter into a new relationship. What is a spiritual acceptance of the truth of God's existence? It is neither more nor less than a knowledge of God's existence bestowed upon the soul through its own spiritual powers. Such knowledge comes now to the soul of man by one means only, and that is through an acceptance of the revelation of the Father's life which Christ the Son makes by and within himself and his own earthly life.

Prior to the coming of Christ it was possible for the soul of man to know its God, spiritually, through the exercise of its spiritual powers direct, and by the aid of such revelation as the soul then possessed within itself. The intellectual power had not then so far dominated and weakened the spiritual as to render this impossible, as it has since done. With the coming of Christ came the last revelation of God to man. The spiritual powers of man had then dwindled to their lowest degree of strength and the intellectual powers had become dominant. This constituted the fullness of time in which Christ should appear among men. Of his coming and of his nature the intellectual powers of man had no conception. He reached his disciples alone through their spiritual powers. The intellectual powers of man crucified him; the spiritual powers of man accepted him. This was true in his day and it is as true in our day as it was in his day. Intellect does crucify Christ and will crucify him to the end of

time. The soul's spiritual powers do now accept him and will accept him to the end of time, whenever the soul itself seeks obedience, worship and knowledge through these powers. This it will not and cannot do while possessing that feeling of independence and self-sufficiency which is engendered of intellectual power.

Earthly life is a gracious gift from God to those who rightly use it, but spiritual existence is as rest from labor; as the peace of sleep to the anxious worry of waking hours, when compared therewith. What, then, is spiritual existence? Spiritual existence is a truth, a reality, a fact. This it is for each and all upon whom the gift of human life is bestowed. None others do possess it, none others can possess it. Spiritual existence is an outgrowth of, an effect of, a complement of, earthly existence. It can come in no other way than through and because of a physical existence. Hence spiritual existence is limited to those who have possessed, who now possess or who shall hereafter possess, a physical existence. I speak now of spiritual existence in its proper and distinctive character. It is true that man is taught that God and all his creatures higher than man, exist as spirits, but this is because man can comprehend no higher existence than his own spiritual existence. For this reason that term is broadened so as to include all higher, although distinct, states of existence. When the term is used to include and cover all life which is freed from or is superior to a physical existence, it conveys one meaning which I claim is not its proper meaning. When it is used

to designate the life of man freed from its physical associations it expresses another meaning which I claim is its proper signification. Man's life after death is spiritual existence. It is not the same as the life of angel or of archangel; it is not the same as the life of God the Father, although it is the same as the life of Jesus Christ the Son, because through a human existence he entered into the spiritual existence. Hence we will be like Jesus in the quality of our life, if we enter into that state of spiritual existence designated spiritual life, in which state alone we can have the power to know him. Spiritual existence, therefore, I define as that quality of life which is bestowed upon the human creature and which is everlasting. It begins with the creation of the soul and it never ends. Earthly existence I likewise define as being that associated quality of life which is bestowed upon the soul at its creation and ends with its human death. Spiritual existence and earthly existence are blended into one, while the soul remains in this material world. Death ends the latter and makes of the former the supreme quality of life. Spiritual existence either before or after human death is divided into two states, the one called spiritual life, the other spiritual death. If you will bear these several and distinct assertions in mind you will be prepared for the thoughts which follow. Spiritual existence and spiritual life must not be confounded. We all have the former; some only enter into the latter. Those who do not enter into spiritual life do enter into spiritual death, which is the opposite state in spiritual existence. Spiritual

existence is therefore for all of us a continuation of our present existence in part. We drop the material and continue the spiritual of that which we now are. In the main our lives remain unchanged. We fall into a sleep as to seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling. We continue ourselves in other respects. We know that we exist and that we exert our individual powers. We are conscious of all our thoughts, and this constitutes life in its essence. Earthly life itself might well be defined to be, the possession of the power to think, and the consciousness of our thoughts. While this is neither a complete nor even a full definition of earthly existence it is both a complete and a full definition of spiritual existence. Spiritual existence is not and never can be more to us than the power to think and the consciousness of our thoughts. Let me illustrate. Some human beings are deaf and dumb, and yet they possess human existence in its fullest sense, lacking only these two powers. Others may be both blind and deaf and dumb and of them the same must be said, lacking only the three powers. Now we will imagine a human being still in human existence who is blind, and deaf, who has lost the sense of smell, the sense of taste and the sense of feeling; such person would still possess human existence in all its fullness save as to these five senses or powers. It would be impossible for such an one to know matter, because it would be impossible for anything material to act upon any power or sense which would convey an impression to the soul. Such an one would be wholly dead to the material world,

although still possessing existence in such world. Such an one would know no change when real physical death came to him. Practically he died when the last physical sense connecting his soul with the physical world failed him. Thereafter death was powerless to produce any further change or experience of which his soul could take cognizance. It appears to me that the foregoing is a plain declaration of a truth, which is justified by our experience or observation; therefore, my assertion that this is all that there is of death may seem neither strange nor startling.

Let us turn to that existence which follows such death. In the light of what I have declared to be the truth, let us approach death and our after experience. Follow me, as I follow those who have gone before, through an experience which must be ours in reality when God wills, but which now must be an experience in anticipation. The hold of the soul upon its physical organization is loosening. Long association with the body and long control over the body, makes the soul tenacious of its control. It is conscious of relaxation of vital physical power. Its power of thought, and the consciousness of the existence of that power remain unchanged. It knows that dissolution is approaching. It from the spiritual side of life marks the loss of one physical sense, probably sight. It is shut out on the physical side of life from light and all is dark to it. Its remaining physical senses are growing dull. The minor ones of taste and smell depart. Hearing and sensation, or feeling, remain,

with possibly the power of speech, each with wavering and decreasing force. Muscular control is gone, and with it speech fails. Hearing and feeling remain, as the only channels through which the soul can know an earthly existence. Hearing fails, and the silence of eternity begins. Now the soul can yet know that there is a physical world through one channel alone, feeling or sensation. Sensation goes, and the body is dead to the soul, although life may yet be within that body, for the unconscious control of the soul over the body may continue for an indefinite period thereafter. This is a state of wholly unconscious physical life, which ordinarily ends quickly. The soul is now freed from its body and has lost all control over it and all knowledge of it save that which comes through memory. It remains a thinking being, conscious of its power to think and of its exercise of that power. It knows nothing and can know nothing of the physical world because there remains no channel connecting it therewith and through which knowledge of the physical world may reach it. We know nothing of the physical world save through those senses which connect our souls therewith and carry knowledge thereof to us. These have perished, one and all. The soul is in eternity. Out of eternity it entered into time; through time it re-enters eternity, thereafter to remain forever a self-conscious, thinking power, a spark from the eternal life of the infinite Father. That spark existed as a part of the Father's life, without beginning. That spark was separated from the Father's life, in so far as to give it individuality,

through its human creation, and that individuality once bestowed, can never be taken from it. All created life is of God a part, but all of created life is not God, for God is more than all, and is above all that springs from him.

This individual spark from God, this soul which has lived upon the earth and has died, is in eternity. It has knowledge of earth through its memory of its experiences while upon the earth, otherwise it can have no knowledge of any physical creation anywhere. Its world is now a world of spirit. Its existence is now spiritual and wholly spiritual. It finds itself shorn of all which connected it with the physical creation upon the earth and of all those powers which pertain to earthly life alone. What is there for it in eternity? Nothing of form; nothing of color; nothing of sound; nothing that we call real. What then are its possessions? An existence unreal, when measured by the thoughts of earth, in which its powers of thought remain unchanged. To it clings a memory of earth, which will gradually fade away, just as the memory of early childhood faded from its later life in earth, so that in its future existence that cycle approaches wherein it shall remember nothing of its own beginning, nor of its earthly existence, even as now it remembers nothing of its own infancy or of its first consciousness of individual existence. To this extent, and to this extent only, will the soul in its spiritual and everlasting existence be merged back and lost in the infinite life of its Father, God. Individuality of being is forever assured to it, but knowledge of

its own beginning can never be bestowed upon it. Such knowledge belongs alone to infinite powers.

When the soul thus finds itself in eternity, it does not rest. Cut off from the use and benefit of its earthly powers it longs for others to replace them. It has them, but they are undeveloped, just as in its earthly infancy it had some powers pertaining to its earth life which were undeveloped. The power of speech is given because speech is dependent upon matter and the soul's control of it, both of which are now lost to it. Language is a human device and ends with death. To make good this loss the soul first finds that it possesses the power to communicate its thoughts to others and to receive the thoughts of others, without the use of sound, speech or language.

This power it uses, feebly at first, as the earthly infant learns first to prattle. This is a power we may know that the soul possesses because it is a spiritual power which may be developed and used in human life, and in very truth is the power by and through which these words are written. It is a power which every created soul possesses. It is a power which few can develop upon earth, and which no one should seek to develop. It belongs to spiritual existence and to that existence alone. It is foreign to all that pertains to earth, and is forbidden of God to man in his human estate, save as he both wills and compels its use. None ever so use it except they be first tried of God and compelled of him as a choice between such use and their own spiritual death. When thus used by

them it is under and by reason of a law revealed to them alone through experience and inexplicable without the experience. This wonderful power of thought transference, without media of sound or language, or word or figure, becomes the compensation to the soul for its loss of earthly physical powers and senses. It is the language of spiritual existence, the music of spiritual existence, the beauty of spiritual existence, the grandeur of spiritual existence, limited as it is alone by the power of the soul to think. Whatever my thoughts may be, to the limit of my power to think, at will, I give them to another. Whatever the thoughts of that other, at the other's will, and to the limit of my power to receive, I have them. Is this a loss compared with earthly limitations?

This much of spiritual existence belongs to every soul. None can have less, some will have more. From this point a new life arises for those to whom it is given. It is the development of those spiritual powers through which God is recognized and is known. The development of these powers should begin in earth-life, and does so begin whenever obedience is sought therein. It is the few who thus seek obedience. It is the many who willfully disobey. Such development is begun with the first effort to obey, and if such efforts are not made in human life, opportunity having been therein given, they never will be made. No human soul to which such opportunity has been given in human life, and which has not therein chosen obedience, can ever make such choice in that existence which follows death. The

reason therefor is, not that God would there refuse to receive and forgive, for that could never be, but because such soul by its choice of disobedience, and by its act of disobedience, in accordance with such choice, has destroyed forever those spiritual powers by and through which alone it is possible for it to know God. If in our human life we should by our own choice and by our own act destroy our power of physical vision by destroying the organs of sight, we could never thereafter see. Spiritually my assertion is the same. By our own act of disobedience, coupled with a purpose to disobey, we destroy forever our spiritual power to know God as completely and as permanently as we would destroy vision by a voluntary destruction of our organs of vision. One such act, associated with such purpose, is all that is required to do this, and most certainly and positively does do it. There is no repentance for such sin. There is no forgiveness for such sin, for the reason that the soul thus sinning will never thereafter know repentance or seek forgiveness; both are impossible to it. This choice is made in human life if the opportunity therefor comes to the soul therein. If no opportunity for such choice comes to it in its human life, it will come to it in its spiritual existence, and such choice will then be made. Heaven is entered through but one door, and that door is the choice of the soul of obedience to the will of God as revealed to us by and through Christ, the Son. Heaven contains no soul which has not of its own free will made this choice, and followed such choice by obedience. Therefore

I say that the soul that has thus chosen obedience in its human life, in addition to this power of thought transference, will find itself possessed of an incipient development of the spiritual power to know God, which includes the spiritual powers of obedience and worship. I call these spiritual powers. It is not easy to conceive of them as powers, or to express in words the thoughts which represent them. It is true that one soul knows God, knows that God exists, knows that God loves him, knows that God speaks to him, knows that he is at peace with God and that he is approved of God; knows that Christ is the divine Son of the infinite Father, knows that Christ is spiritually with him, revealing to him the life and the will of the Father. The soul may know all this, even in earth-life. It may also worship God and Christ, the divine Son, its Saviour, and be conscious that it does thus worship. The soul may also obey God, doing God's will as revealed to it, in preference to its own will, whenever the two would otherwise conflict; thus ever making God's revealed will first and its own will second, or in other words, making free choice to do God's will. Of such knowledge, of such worship, of such obedience, the soul is conscious. How does it receive or come into this consciousness? Just as it receives and comes into all other consciousness, through the exercise or use of a power. Consciousness cannot come to the soul in any other way. Therefore I use the terms, power to know God, power to worship God, power to obey God, and thus used the terms are as accurate as to speak of the power to hear or know sound.

When this choice of the soul, made in human life if its opportunity was then presented, and made in its spiritual existence if no such opportunity was presented during its human life, is disobedience and its act is according to its choice, then by such choice and act it destroys forever these undeveloped spiritual powers, and its spiritual existence continues thereafter with this one spiritual power of thought transference, as the only power remaining to it for development. I say only power, because in my judgment human comprehension of the spiritual existence can go no farther than to conceive of and in a measure comprehend these four purely spiritual powers which I have named. To say that these four channels are the only channels through which knowledge may come to the soul during its endless spiritual existence would neither be justifiable nor reasonable; but to say that they are the only sources of knowledge which the human mind can now comprehend, is both justifiable and reasonable. I do not here seek to trace the effect of the development of these four powers by the soul, in the one case, and of the loss of the three powers, in the other case. That has already been done in part and must again be dwelt upon at length.

The human life of man passeth into the spiritual life of the soul through its separation from all material existence and such are some of the changes which come over it. Such is the rest of the dead from the labors of human existence. Such is the sleep of death, whether it be in the dust of the grave, in the bottom of the sea, or in the ashes

and the gases of the flame. It is the soul's sleep to all that is material; a sleep that shall know no waking forever. It is sleep only as to things material; it never can be sleep as to things spiritual.

CHAPTER VII.

ZOPHAR, JOB'S THIRD FRIEND.—THE LAW BY WHICH

ALONE THE SOUL CAN KNOW ITS CREATOR.—

PANTHEISM.

The trial of the soul must come to it. It cannot be escaped.

In his weakness Job would have escaped accountable human existence and would have chosen to have passed from birth through death into spiritual existence. It was his uninstructed thought that led him to believe that he would have thus escaped the trial of his soul through which he was then passing. Is not this phase of Job's character and belief often repeated upon the earth? Have we ever in our weakness and in our sufferinig wished, like Job, that we might have died in our infancy and thus have escaped the sore trials of this life? If we have, then let us hear the words of Zophar. This third friend of Job is the third spiritual stage of man's progress in human life. To explain, we must amplify this thought. . By spiritual stage we mean period of development. Man's life in earth is divided into three periods or stages of development.

First. The imbecility of infancy and childhood.

Second. The self-confidence, boldness, independence and stubbornness of early life.

Third. The spirit of wisdom, circumspection and investigation, which comes with matured years.

Each of these three stages carries with it a different spirit. The first, a spirit of helplessness and dependence; the second a spirit of independence, self-sufficiency and self-will; the third a spirit of investigation, willingness to be taught, and of deference to greater wisdom. This third state and the spirit which accompanies it, were Job's at the period of his sore affliction, and this state and spirit spake to him in the words of Zophar. It is therefore proper to say, that in this allegorical presentation of truth, Zophar stands for the matured human state of the soul, intellectually and spiritually. Job's own soul, therefore, spake unto itself the words of Zophar. The book of Job is an allegorical presentation of truth as it comes to each and every one who suffers affliction and seeks these truths concerning it. Such soul turns to its God because it believes in God, and this belief in God, is its first friend and comforter. In such belief it speaks to itself in the words of Eliphaz. Having this first friend, such soul must have the thought and must accept the truth, that God's wisdom is infinite.

With the acceptance of this truth, comes to it the words of Bildad. Having these two friends, the spirit of its maturer years and riper development, both intellectually and spiritually, speaks to it in the words of Zophar. Job sought God and could not find him. Forward and backward, to the right and to the left, God was hidden from him. This is true of all men everywhere, and shall be forever

true. Neither man, nor angel, nor arch-angel, nor cherub, nor seraph, can be said to know God, in the sense of comprehending him. God is known to all his creatures according to one and the same law, which law is both changeless and everlasting. Can we find that law? Can we comprehend it? Can we declare it? This is what we now aim to do, according to the limited powers of our human endowment. In doing this we will outline the course of thought to be followed under the following heads, which will guide us in this search after this law, in our efforts to comprehend it, and in the declaration of it.

First. God's life is not the life of any created being.

Second. Our comprehension of life depends upon our possession of the life comprehended, in whole or in part, and the degree of such comprehension depends upon the degree in which we possess the comprehended life.

Third. The measure of God's life which we have within our own being is dependent upon our own efforts.

Fourth. A full comprehension of God would mean the possession of all the life which he possesses; to be what he is, in all his infinite attributes. This being impossible for any created being sustains the assertion that no creature can ever fully comprehend and know God, no matter what the quality or plane of its created life may be.

The foregoing must be considered in our effort to find the law. In our effort to comprehend the law we must further consider the following:

Fifth. The low estate and endowment of man, and the aids necessitated thereby.

Sixth. The missing power in those who have destroyed it and the growing power in those who have cultivated it.

Seventh. The human plane of life and the material existence which limits the thought of man.

Thereafter in our efforts to declare this law we must consider:

Eighth. The spiritual nature of human life and the imperfect action of its powers during earthly existence.

Ninth. The inferiority of the soul's spiritual powers, when at their fullest in spiritual existence.

Tenth. The impossibility of aiding any of these powers by any material figure, either here or hereafter.

Then in conclusion our thoughts must turn to God. What is he? What may we ever know of him?

First. Life we have heretofore defined to be a manifestation of individual existence. This is a brief yet comprehensive definition of life, in whatsoever plane or degree of existence it may be found. Life may be more than this, but it cannot be less than this. Life which falls below this is oblivion. Life may exist in oblivion, but it is not manifested life, hence it is not included in the term, life, as we ordi-

narily use it. Such life we have treated of elsewhere and it has no connection with the present inquiry. Life as we are now considering it is that which can and must forever manifest itself in some plane or degree of existence. Such life begins with the life of God, which in itself has ever been without beginning, and ends with the life of man, which has beginning but shall never end. Man's life is the lowest which escapes oblivion. God's life is above all created life. Between these two there is an incomprehensible span which is subdivided into degrees or planes of existence, unknown to man, save through that revelation thereof which God has given to him. While we must forever remain in ignorance of all these higher states or planes of individual life, we may know that they exist by a double assurance of such knowledge. First, by the direct word of inspired revelation; second, by that knowledge of the law of life which is both revealed to us by divine revelation and is declared unto us by our own life and by that life which is yet beneath our own. The fact of life may be an empty meaningless truth to the thoughtless; it cannot be so to the thoughtful. Which of us has even answered to his own satisfaction the inquiries which at some period come to all of us, What is life? Whence does it come? What is its destiny? Life is for us the one problem which goes back of birth, fills the present, and reaches out beyond death into and through eternity. It is the problem of the ages, unsolved and unsolvable. In this much is our life like the life of God. This likeness is independent of the moral and the spirit-

ual qualities of the soul. Through these another and a distinct likeness unto the life of God may become implanted in our souls, and it is this latter likeness of which we shall speak principally in this argument. God's life is something which lies so far above the possible conception of our finite powers that it is impossible that we should comprehend it. Its character of being eternal, without beginning, is itself incomprehensible to the mind of man. Finite mind staggers under the weight of this thought, and whatever its strength may be, in such contemplation it reaches the point where it must fall helpless in its search after a beginning. That which is true of this thought is likewise true of all the infinite attributes of God. God's life is manifested only by and through these attributes. We can know that he exists in no other way than through our consciousness that he exercises these attributes towards us. This consciousness is the knowledge of God's existence which we now possess, and is the same in kind, of all the knowledge of his existence which we can ever possess. It is the same in kind as all the knowledge all creatures, however high their degree or plane of life may be, can ever possess. We can safely assert this when we once know that this is the law by which we as creatures can alone know our Creator, for the laws of God are both universal in their application and are changeless in their essence or nature. Experience in our own human lives teaches us that this is the law by which alone we may know God. At least our experience teaches us this when we can rightly read and apply

such experience. Revelation contains the same truth in manifold forms of declaration. Experience and revelation must go hand in hand in leading the soul into the acceptance of this truth. The life of God is therefore an incomprehensible life, above and beyond all states or degrees of created life.

Second. We cannot comprehend any life of which we possess no part. I believe this truth is apparent to but few of us. We believe that we can comprehend anything that we can think of. Such is the natural conceit of the human intellectual nature. It is however a truth that we can think of many things that we cannot comprehend. I will illustrate this thought in this way. The thought of eternity is one which we cannot possibly comprehend. Eternity is neither more nor less than time infinitely extended backwards and infinitely extended forwards from the present instant. These thoughts as we have seen stagger and finally overpower the strongest human intellects in an effort to compass them. Time is a subdivision of eternity bounded by a beginning and limited by an end. Human intellect can comprehend time because, first, it is finite, having limits, and second, we have experienced it in our own lives. By these two truths we are enabled to comprehend time. We can comprehend eternity in part, because we have experienced it in part in our own lives. The time which we experience in our lives, being a part of eternity, enables us to assert that we have experienced, have possessed, and have known a part of eternity, and by the measure of this experience we may know and

which we may exert ourselves, what follows? A blank existence, with all which that term implies. Such an existence is impossible in this material world save only to the idiot and to such others as might possibly exist without one single physical sense or power to connect their souls with the material creation. Such a case is supposable and I have used it as an illustration of what human death is. I may now use it as an illustration of what spiritual death will be for all who enter it. In the supposed case the soul through the death of all of its physical senses and powers is rendered wholly and forever unconscious of the existence of a material world, although it still exists in such world. All the avenues through which the soul can take cognizance of the existence of such world have been cut off. That world still exists and the soul still exists in that world but without any knowledge thereof. So likewise the soul which by its own choice and act of willful disobedience has destroyed all the spiritual powers which it possessed, by and through which alone it might have known God, must thereafter live in precisely the same relation to the kingdom of God, whether it be in this world or in the world to come, as the soul in the illustration, sustains to the material kingdom. Again, take the soul in the illustration and consider what are the possibilities of its acquiring that knowledge which rests upon and is declared by the physical creation. It has no chance whatever; its life is a blank, in so far as such knowledge is concerned. If one physical sense or power, one avenue from the physical world to the soul re-

mains open, then it may obtain some knowledge thereof. With all closed it can obtain no such knowledge. The soul in the illustration may still have its spiritual powers as God bestowed them, and may through them be enabled to reach out after and to know God. If it does this its life is not a blank, but is great and beautiful and satisfying just in proportion to the knowledge of God which it shall acquire. The degree of such knowledge is dependent upon the earnestness and the continuity of the effort to acquire it. Herein lies the *all* of heavenly joy. It is the joy of the knowledge which the soul has acquired of God its Creator. This knowledge and this joy are the direct result of its own efforts and are in direct proportion to the strength and the persistency of such efforts.

Fourth. We have asserted that we can only know a life which we possess in whole or in part and that our knowledge of such life is governed by the degree in which we possess it. This is a truth which can be established from our own human experience. We possess human life and we know such life as fully as our powers of comprehension will permit. We also possess spiritual life, but only in part, and our consciousness of our possession of it is not constant. Such consciousness may and often does become strong by growth. It may also become weak by our own abuse of it. We know our own spiritual existence only to the degree in which we are conscious of its possession. To know this existence fully we would have to possess it in all its untramed fullness. This can only be after death shall have freed

us from our present dual existence. Here then are two distinct planes or states of existence in which our own experience teaches us the foregoing truth. Upon this we may safely base the law and the declaration above stated. God's existence is an infinitely higher existence than is our own spiritual existence. He has, however, bestowed upon us the power to experience in some slight degree a portion of his own existence. It is possible that we should know something of God's love, appropriating that something ourselves and making it a part of our own love towards our fellow men. In doing this we know something of God's life, that is, to the extent to which we thus appropriate his love and make it a part of our own lives. It is this one infinite attribute of God's life that we may know the most fully, because this attribute has been the most fully declared and revealed to us, through Jesus Christ the Son. We may, however, know something of God's infinite power as Christ revealed and used and exemplified that power: neither is it going beyond the words of Christ himself to say that we his children may in some measure use and exemplify that power also. The same in every respect is true of God's attribute of infinite wisdom. It even may be exemplified through his human children, if they be found worthy. All that is revealed to us of God's life is that he is a Being of infinite power, infinite wisdom and infinite love. What other attributes he possesses we have no power to know, and these three revealed attributes we can only know to the limit and extent that we make them a part of our own lives. It is thus, and

thus alone, that we may know God in earth. It is thus and thus alone, that we will know God in heaven.

We have thus found the law, by which, and by which alone, it is possible for us to know God, and we will next consider whether we can comprehend the law.

Fifth. In doing this we must consider the low estate of man's endowments and the aids that are necessitated thereby. It is with difficulty that man comprehends anything that is spiritual. His physical endowment is so positive in its expression and so intense in realization through self-conscious experiences, that it casts the shadow of a never ceasing doubt over all spiritual consciousness and experience. This is a necessity to the perpetuation of the human race upon the earth. Remove from the mind of man this indistinctness of spiritual experience and this uncertainty as to his own spiritual nature and powers, and you invite self-destruction without any restraint other than the moral law. This alone would be insufficient. The spiritual state of the soul is so vastly superior to the physical state that were its truths and its powers consciously realized in earth, the soul's choice would be human death, and where such choice exists the way to gratify it will be found. Infinite wisdom has provided that man's spiritual nature in his human state should be shadowy, uncertain, and only consciously possessed through the personal efforts of the soul in the development of such spiritual powers as will deter it from the self-destruction of its earthly life. There is but one exception to this declaration. One spirit-

ual power, which is wholly free from any moral quality, may be imperfectly experienced in human life. This is the power of thought transference, or the power of a soul in the body to exchange thought with a soul out of the body. What this power is, but few really understand. Whether they understand it or not, all who do use it know that it is the most unsatisfactory, uncertain, irresponsible and unreliable of all the powers that the soul has ever experienced or used. This is true whenever and wherever it is used by and between those who do not themselves comprehend or recognize the law which governs its use. For all such it is a Tower of Babel, experienced as a reality in their own lives. It is founded in error and builded in disobedience, either purposed or unknown, and will result in naught. This truth without explanation is not clear. Explanation would be meaningless to those who lack the experience necessary to apply it. It would not be accepted by those who have the experience. I therefore leave it as a truth asserted but not established.

With this low endowment and this uncertainty in the use of this the only spiritual power possible to him, other than those imposing and enforcing moral obligations by and through their very development, it is impossible that the soul of man should acquire spiritual understanding without material aids. Man, until he has experienced spiritual life, cannot know spiritual life; therefore he must be taught spiritual truths in the figures and terms of physical life. It is for this reason that God is re-

ferred to as a person, with bodily form and parts, possessing a likeness to human passions and powers; that heaven is described by terms material; that hell is made real to the mind by terms and figures physical. This same law of expression runs through all revelation. It is figurative to all who require the figure; it is spiritual to all who can rise above the figure and comprehend the spiritual truth as it is.

Sixth. Up to this point in our presentation of this explanation all human beings of sound mind and moral accountability have the same power to experience spiritual truth and to comprehend spiritual law. At this point is the parting of the ways; the way of life, and the way of death. If the soul enters the way of life it chooses obedience to and worship and knowledge of God. If it enters the way of death, it chooses to do its own will, to refuse worship of God and to be ignorant of his existence. The former choice leads to the development of three spiritual powers which we have elsewhere described. The latter choice leads to the destruction of these three powers, wherefore the impossibility of their development forever afterwards. From this point on therefore we must keep in mind these two classes of human beings and we will confine our explanation wholly to that class which chooses obedience worship and knowledge. The second class can never get beyond that knowledge of the spiritual existence which comes by and through the development of this one spiritual power. They are and will ever be limited by it, and this one power will limit all they can

ever know of spiritual truth after the making of the choice which we have named.

Seventh. Devoting our thoughts, therefore, to those who have chosen obedience, we continue. The human plane of life is low, when we seek to know spiritual truths. It is only possible that we should know such truths in their plainest and simplest expression. We begin at the very bottom of spiritual knowledge the same as we begin at the bottom of physical knowledge. We advance slowly and only to a very limited degree during our human existence. This is sufficient for our earthly needs and secures for us the possibilities of an everlasting spiritual life. If we cannot advance beyond the conception of God and heaven by means of material thought, it is well, and spiritual existence will enlarge this knowledge. If, however, we can disassociate the spiritual and the material, and can conceive of God as a spirit, and of heaven as a spiritual state, it is better, by so much as such conceptions advance our spiritual knowledge and the better prepare us for the truths of the spiritual existence. The thoughts of the great majority of the human race are now limited by human environment and material existence. They cannot rise above these, and they must die without any greater knowledge of spiritual truths than can be acquired by and through such material thoughts. That this is asserting that they are thereby unprepared to enter into the kingdom of heaven, is farthest from our thoughts, but there is a danger in this limited knowledge and distorted understanding which we cannot avoid pointing out. It is not every

one who starts out earnestly desirous to obey, to worship and to know God, who perseveres in such desires and efforts until death. This assertion we will accept as truth from our observation and study of men. We admit and believe that the effort is earnest. We also believe that a measure of success crowns the effort. Such souls attain a measure of the joy of obedience and worship and a measure of knowledge of God. Then, why do they relapse into disobedience? The inquiry is answered by one word—doubt. Doubt lies behind all sin; doubt as to the necessity for obedience; doubt as to the joy of worship; doubt as to the existence of God. Doubt is a shadow which follows every Christian throughout human life. Doubt may enter through death into the heavenly kingdom of the spiritual existence. This is asserting nothing either strange or new. Doubt may continue without end, but not in heaven. Doubt must eventually come to an end in heaven, for the soul which cannot rise above it will certainly disobey and fall. Then, souls may sin in heaven? Yes, forever yes, while doubt remains in heaven. If the kingdom of heaven begins in the spiritual nature of man in earth, as we know it does, and men through doubt fall from that kingdom through sin into spiritual death, so may they after that they have passed through death, provided always that their doubts continue. If they do not find and realize the heaven they pictured and believed in, while in earth life, it is possible for them to cease their efforts after spiritual knowledge, give way to doubt and fall. This is a trial all must endure either in

human or in spiritual existence. All these things stand in the way of our comprehension of the law we are discussing. We will now turn to that which stands in the way of our declaring this law.

Eighth. We first take up the thought that the spiritual nature of the soul is very imperfectly developed during its human life. The imperfect action of its spiritual powers renders it difficult for the soul to acquire spiritual truths. Such truths come to it alone through these powers. There is no other channel along which they may reach the soul. This we have before asserted and have sustained the assertion by argument which may have been understood and accepted and may have been misunderstood and rejected. If the latter, its repetition would be unavailing. We assume the former and proceed. The absence of all spiritual powers renders the acquisition of spiritual knowledge impossible; the feeble use of such powers renders the acquisition of such knowledge meager and uncertain. Such knowledge only becomes positive and well defined when such powers, or some of them, are working up to their full capacity, when measured by the state in which the soul exists. Nothing less than this can satisfy the soul of the existence of the spiritual truths which it seeks. How many feel that they are within this classification? Certainly not many. It therefore follows that the great majority of those who are seeking spiritual truths have but an uncertain and indefinite conception of the truths they seek. Will you admit that you are one of this large class? If you will not admit this, you will at least scarcely deny

it. This is the reason, and the sole reason, that all that knowledge which pertains to the spiritual existence is so shadowy, so indefinite, and so uncertain in your mind. This is one reason why it is so hard to declare this law by and through which we know God both here and hereafter.

Ninth. Our next thought is the infirmity of the spiritual powers when at their best, both in human and in spiritual existence. The human soul is a weakling among God's spiritual creatures. It is the lowest, the feeblest, the dullest of them all. A comparison of the intellectual powers of the child with the highest possible attainments of the matured human intellect, may serve to lead our minds to a comparison of the spiritual powers of the human soul, with the unknown and unknowable powers of creatures nearest God, but this is all it can do. All that we may know is that God has created us to fill the plane of intelligent existence wherein we find ourselves; that he has endowed us with a nature and with powers suited thereto, and that we may be and should be happy and contented therewith. Upon our plane of existence we could not use or enjoy any higher natures or greater powers than those which we possess. God's revelation to us teaches us this truth. Such revelation comes to us through every order of life below us, down to the very lowest that is discernible to the human mind. Each is happy and contented with that with which it is endowed, and that which it possesses is perfectly adapted to its requirements in the plane of life which it occupies. The divine law thus revealed to us is applicable from the lowest order

of life to the highest. It is equally applicable to our own existence, both physical and spiritual. If we recognize and accept this truth then we must be content with such spiritual knowledge as our limited spiritual powers will enable us to acquire. This in eternity may be great, as compared with our present spiritual ignorance, but it must always be small when compared with that knowledge which may be acquired by creatures of vastly higher lives and of vastly superior powers, than are our own. Such creatures must know God by the same law by which we know him, for no two creatures may ever know their Creator by other than one and the same law.

Tenth. To these difficulties in the way of declaring such law must be added another which is greater than either. This is the impossibility of aiding these spiritual powers by any material figure, either here or hereafter. We have heretofore asserted that material figures do aid the soul in acquiring spiritual truths. This is so only in so far as such figures point the way to such truths when they are first sought after. When any conception of a spiritual truth, however imperfect, has been grasped by the soul, then such figure must take its place below such conception. In other words, the conception of the truth must be higher than the figure which led up to it, or else it cannot be a conception of the truth at all. After any conception of a spiritual truth has been once grasped by the soul, then all material figures perish. This is true in earth-life, and being true in this life it is manifestly true in the spiritual existence. Now, try to think of God without associating with him any thought which

is associated with or dependent upon a material existence. You will thus eliminate from your conception of God all thoughts of form, of size, of substance, of appearance, of place or location; all thoughts of sound, of sight by means of vision or light; all thoughts of words from him or addressed to him; all thoughts of a personal presence as defined or limited by location or place; all thoughts of an adoration and worship which is in any manner dependent upon any material existence of God, of ourselves, or of any place; all thoughts of heaven as a place, of hell as a place; all thoughts of joy and of sorrow which would require any material existence for their realization; do this and let your spiritual powers act untrammeled by earthly and material existence, and what have we? A spiritual conception of God. Have you done this? Are you capable of doing it? If not, you will have to do it before you can know God in your spiritual existence. We do not by this assertion mean that you must do this before you can enter heaven, for this is not true; but it is true that you must do this before you can know God in your spiritual existence. This truth and this necessity make it extremely difficult to declare the law by which alone we must know God, in language both comprehensible and intelligible.

This brings us to the conclusion of this declaration of truth, which we sum up as follows: God's existence is wholly spiritual and we must ever so conceive him. To us his existence is spiritual because that is the highest existence we can conceive of any being possessing. In truth God's life is not spiritual, but is far above and beyond any spiritual existence.

God's life is, in truth, a life above and beyond the possible conception of any created intelligence. God's life has been revealed to all of his intelligent creatures from the beginning of their existence; revealed to each upon the plane of existence which it itself occupies; revealed to man upon both planes of existence which he occupies, the spiritual and the physical. The physical revelation to man was transient, the spiritual revelation is everlasting. Christ's physical life was upon the plane of our physical life. In like manner Christ's spiritual life is upon the plane of our spiritual life. Christ will remain with us in our spiritual existence forever, as he is now with us in our spiritual existence, even though that be yet in earth. Christ is with us always, even to the ends of the earth. This is his declaration and it is the experience of his true worshipers. Christ is with them in spirit, in earth life, as he will be with them in spirit in their spiritual existence; in the one the same as in the other, save that in our spiritual existence our spiritual natures and powers will be greatly quickened, so that that which we now see through a glass, dimly, we shall then see openly. The method and the law by which we behold him in our earthly existence are the method and the law by which we will behold him in our spiritual existence. The difference is alone in the degree of clearness with which we comprehend and know our Saviour. As Christ through his earthly life became to men the clearest and the fullest revelation of God to them, so will Christ in his spiritual existence ever be to souls in spiritual existence the clearest and the fullest revelation of

God to them. As Christ is not the only revelation of God to man in human life, so also he is not the only revelation of God to the souls of men in their spiritual existence. He is but one of such revelations. God reveals himself to the souls of men in their spiritual existence in the same manner in which he reveals himself to them in human life, and in no other way. God's Holy Spirit is the medium of such revelation both in earth life and in spiritual existence. Without the Holy Spirit God would be forever hidden from the souls of men. Not but that man has the spiritual powers to know God, without the aid of the Holy Spirit, but that without such aid man would never develop these powers.

In the foregoing we have laid the foundation for such declaration of the law by which alone we may know God, as we are able to conceive. We will express it thus: God in infinite wisdom has created beings possessing many orders or degrees of intelligence. Of such beings man is the lowest. God has bestowed upon man a dual nature, physical and spiritual. Through the physical, God has connected man with the orders of life below intelligent existence. In doing this he has made him mortal as to his physical nature and life, but immortal as to his spiritual nature and life. Through his physical and mortal nature and life, man cannot know his Creator. Through his spiritual and immortal nature and life, man may know his Creator. To do this he must use the powers which belong to that nature and these powers alone. In man's physical existence his spiritual powers are subservient to those physical powers

which are essential to his continued human existence; therefore as a last and greatest aid to these spiritual powers God gave to man a physical revelation of himself, in the person, by the life, and through the character of Jesus Christ his Son, who was in God's semblance in human flesh; in God's likeness in spiritual character; and was God's revealed self both in his human and in his spiritual existence. Christ was God manifested in the flesh; Christ is God and shall forever be God manifested in the spirit of that human flesh. God's revelation of himself to man is therefore threefold: First, direct, as by his creative power; second, through his Holy Spirit teaching us his infinite wisdom; third, through Jesus Christ, teaching, manifesting and declaring his infinite love. If any man receives any one of these three revelations, he of necessity receives all, as each is supported by the other two and cannot exist without such support. No one of these revelations can be truly accepted by man except through the powers of his own spiritual nature; therefore such acceptance is wholly separate and removed from the powers of man's physical nature and life. The acceptance of this revelation in its entirety by and through the powers of man's spiritual nature brings to the soul a spiritual knowledge of its Creator. God communes with such soul through his Holy Spirit. Christ receives such soul to himself in spirit, and the effect of sin in it is thereby destroyed. This, then, is the law, and this the method of the law whereby the soul of man must know its God or forever remain in ignorance of him.

What, then, is God, and what may we know of him? Human thought is powerless to answer what God is. It alone has the power to conceive what we may know of him. This, however, serves as the answer to the first part of the inquiry, insofar as we have the power to know that truth. To conceive of God without form, without expression dependent upon form, without location or place, without voice or word or directly transferred thought, is possible to some and is impossible to others. To thus conceive of God, and to hold such conception above and free from the assertions, the principles and the conceptions of the Pantheist, is a still more difficult effort. Pantheism is distorted truth; a step in the direction of truth, and marks the limit to which a soul unaided may go along the way of truth. Pantheism is error, but it is error of the kind which stands as a milestone marking progress along the way of truth. Such errors bless the world; without them knowledge would stand still. Pantheism fails to rise to a conception of the personality, the individuality, of God, supreme, above and separated from the manifestation of God by and through all things. Into this higher conception I have striven to enter. Into it I am striving to lead others. It is a view of truth, or rather a comprehension of truth, which is not for all an easy undertaking. It is a spiritual conception, not an intellectual conception. Reason has nothing to do with it. Spirit has everything to do with it. By this I mean that it is spiritual knowledge which must be acquired

through the soul's spiritual powers. Reason stops with Pantheism; it may aid that far—it can aid no farther. To be a Pantheist is to be right in the minor part and to be wrong in the major part. To rise into that broader conception of God which includes Pantheism as one of its minor parts is far nearer to the ultimate and unalterable truth. God therefore is a Being, individual in his life, triune in the manifestation of that life, spiritually, and universal in the manifestation of that life physically. Pantheism is a physical truth; trinity is a spiritual truth, and unity is a truth super-spiritual and therefore incomprehensible to spiritual existence and powers. The soul of man acquires its highest knowledge through its spiritual powers. These reveal to it the Trinity of God, and this must ever be its highest conception of God. What, then, may we know of God? This is a question which may only be answered individually. We must know God for ourselves. No other can know God for us, neither can another tell us what God is. Knowledge of God is an experience. It is something that cannot be transferred, something that cannot be imparted or communicated. Knowledge of God is religion in its broadest and fullest sense. It includes knowledge of the Holy Spirit of God, knowledge of Jesus Christ the Son of God, knowledge of sins forgiven through the taking away of the effect of sin, knowledge of spiritual life through the experiencing of such life. Knowledge such as this is the knowledge of God of which I speak. Nothing

less than this is such knowledge. I have such knowledge, and thank my God for it. If you have it, then you know what I have, but I cannot tell you what it is in any other manner or by any other means than through your own experience.

CHAPTER VIII.

RESURRECTION.—ELIHU.—PERFECTION.—SPIRITUAL EXISTENCE.—SPIRITUAL EXALTATION.

The thought that the body of man, though dead, will rise again into a new physical life, is as old as is revelation. It is a thought to which the Christian clings, and has clung, in all ages of the Christian Church. It is a thought, a hope, a belief, which is older than the Christian Church. It goes back to the beginning of spiritual understanding. It is a thought, a hope, a belief, which meets the yearning of the human soul, hence it has been given to the soul. Is it true or is it not true? It is both. As a figure it is true. As a material or physical reality it is not true. What, then, are we to say of the words of Job, "But man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up; so man lieth down and riseth not; till the heavens be no more they shall not awake or be raised out of their sleep"? What truth is declared by these words? This, and this only. That the body of man shall rest in the grave forever; that it shall never awake from the sleep of death. There can be no other meaning given to it. Should another be attempted, what is it? Is it that when the heavens shall have passed away and are no more, then shall the body come out of the dust of the grave? This is the

thought that comes to many upon reading this declaration. It does not sustain this thought. There is no declaration that the body shall then awaken out of this sleep. It is simply an oriental form of expression given to the thought that the body shall never awaken out of the sleep of the grave. What, then, is the resurrection? When is it, and why is it? The resurrection is the springing of the soul out of its earthly into its spiritual existence, shorn of earthly hindrances. This comes immediately, that is, soon after physical death, and following a brief period of unconsciousness or semi-unconsciousness. Why is this so? Because the soul's awakening must be gradual, must be a growth. This is taught by every revelation of nature as well as by the beginning of the soul's own existence. Growth is the law of change in all God's kingdoms. Nothing is brought into being with matured conditions or matured powers. All matured states, all matured powers, all matured conditions, are the result of growth. Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, himself became obedient unto this universal law. Resurrection, then, is the beginning of this new growth as well as the continuance of this new growth, at least to that point where it may be said to be developed. When, therefore, a soul has through such growth attained that state of spiritual existence wherein it may use its spiritual powers in a normal manner, it is resurrected from earthly death. Such period may be long or may be short, as measured by the limitations of time. In the case of our Lord and Saviour, it was upon the third day after death. Jesus lived a perfect human life. He was possessed of a

physically perfect human development. The spiritual existence which sprang from and became an expression of this perfect physical existence, was fully developed and declared within three days. This period, therefore, marks the shortest possible period within which the human soul may be fully resurrected from its physical death. Of the other limit wherein this must happen we have no revelation which is definite. The question, then, remains, Why is there, then, a necessity for a resurrection? This we will answer as we may be able to express some truths which are more or less hidden. We acknowledge the truth that we came into a normal use of our physical powers and senses by a gradual growth extending over a considerable period of infancy. We possessed all these powers and senses from our birth, but we were not able to normally use and profit by them. Therefore there is a necessity for a prolonged period of infancy in the human state. The gradual development of these senses and powers creates this necessity. Growth by gradual development is a law of life. There is no exception to it among the higher orders of creation and none among the higher orders of created powers. Therefore when the change comes from the earthly to the spiritual state the development of the soul's spiritual senses and powers must be, in obedience to this universal law of growth, of gradual development. The soul cannot spring at a bound from a matured and developed physical existence into a matured and developed spiritual existence, any more than it could have been born into a matured and developed physical existence. No soul was ever so

created, not even the souls of Adam and Eve, for they were created infants in point of development, physically, intellectually and spiritually, if such law of growth as we have declared, exists. God never has ignored, suspended, or changed any law which he has revealed to man. That such law of growth does exist, the historic birth and growth and life of Jesus Christ is a sufficient revelation and demonstration. What, then, shall we say of the creation of Adam and of Eve? This is not the time nor the place to apply this law to the truths declared concerning them. This will be done at the proper time and in the proper connection. The law of growth, then, if accepted, requires a period of inactivity immediately following physical death. Such period does exist. It may be long or it may be short. As we have already said, it cannot be shorter than three days, because Christ our Saviour was himself but raised within that period from among the souls of men who slept with him in physical death, and his resurrection was the first, that is, the earliest, the quickest fruits, from among those who had thus slept, or were then sleeping. Christ's earthly or physical childhood was itself brief, for at twelve years, the record tells us, he possessed the powers of ripened and matured manhood. His second period of rest, that with the sleeping souls of the dead, was the very brief period of three days. We know how the period of twelve years compares with the ordinary period of development in the ordinary human life, but we cannot know in this life how the period of three days compares with the ordinary period of the soul's growth into the full pos-

session of its spiritual powers after physical death. It is certainly longer than three days, and may compare with three days about as the period of twelve years compares with the ordinary period for the full development of the ordinary man. Eternity is without measurement or subdivision into periods, therefore it must be impossible for any soul to know the period, measured by earthly time, during which it was growing into that full possession of its spiritual powers which marks the period of its resurrection from physical death. As we of earth mark time it certainly is not a long period for those who are spiritually prepared for death. A belief in God and a belief in and acceptance of the Son of God, carrying with it as it must, a belief in and acceptance of God's Holy Spirit, prepare the soul for speedy passage through this state of growth and gives to it an early resurrection from physical death. Disbelief in God and the rejection of the Son of God, and consequently of God's Holy Spirit, unfit the soul for such growth and protract the period of its resurrection from physical death. To the former is given the assurance of an early, that is, the first, the quickest, resurrection; the latter are self-condemned to the second or a later resurrection.

After Job and his three friends had ceased speaking another character appears in this drama of human life. Elihu is the name which the inspired dramatist has chosen, to represent what? The awakening of the soul out of its own self-righteousness into submission unto its Creator. In this sacred drama, portraying human suffering, the necessity which exists there-

for, the philosophy of its imposition, the effects of which it is the cause and the growth of the soul thereunder, there is no character endowed simply with human powers, which possesses the virtues and the discernment of Elihu. Elihu stands for the consummation of this drama; the perfected soul of man, brought up into perfection through suffering. Elihu represents human perfection. What is human perfection? We will answer this without fear of criticism or hope of commendation, for there is no one truth in all of God's revelation of truth which is subjected to so much misconstruction, misinterpretation and misunderstanding. Perfection is a divine truth, extending from the perfect life of God down through every order of created life, to the lowest forms of instinctive life. Perfection is the law of all creation. God never made an imperfect creature, and no creature below man has any power to destroy the perfection of its own existence. To man and to creatures superior to man is given the power to destroy the perfection of their own existence. Such perfection in man, once destroyed, can alone be regained through the individual efforts of the soul itself. Perfection exists for man. It lies within the power of all men; is attained by some men during their human existence, and ultimately by all men who enter into spiritual life. Perfection is not attained by all men during their human existence although they honestly desire and seek it. For such the struggle for it passes over into that existence which is for them, spiritual life. Is there, then, imperfection in heaven? There is and there is not. What this means will appear

further on. We have thus outlined the thought of perfection as we desire to follow it, and we shall attempt to declare the truth of perfection along the line of this thought. In doing this we will divide the subject for the sake of clearness into the following heads:

First. Perfection is a relative and not an absolute state of existence.

Second. Perfection is a variable state, and its variableness is dependent upon growth, environment and the state of the creature's existence.

Third. The perfection of today may therefore become imperfection tomorrow, without any change in the conduct of the individual.

Fourth. Perfection is the end of all who enter into spiritual life wherever and whenever it may be attained.

First. Perfection is not an absolute state. This is the basic thought of the argument which follows. That perfection is a variable state is another manner of expressing the same thought. Does this assertion appear paradoxical? It would be if perfection was measured by any one changeless standard. This is the thought which may associate with the term perfection, and it is this thought which leads so many into unreasonable and untenable positions respecting it. For man to become perfect as God is perfect, is just as impossible as it is for a brute to become perfect as man may become perfect. The perfection of God is measured by one standard; the perfection of a man by another standard, and the perfection of a brute

by still another standard. You would pronounce it blasphemous to assert that a brute may be perfect, measuring its perfection by the standard of God's perfection. Beware lest you likewise blaspheme by the assertion that any man is or may become perfect, measuring his perfection by the standard of God's perfection. If the former assertion is blasphemy, then the latter is the same. Have you ever thus blasphemed your Creator? Do you now thus blaspheme your Creator? If you have or if you do, then you are the one to whom these words are addressed; not in anger, not in harshness, but in the loving hope that you may see the truth as it is revealed. Finite powers cannot comprehend the infinite life or the infinite attributes of God. It requires the infinite to comprehend the infinite. We do not believe that this declaration will be controverted by any intelligent creature in God's universe of created intelligence. If it is, the being disputing it must make himself equal with God in all that enters into the power of comprehension. We are not certain that such individuals do not exist among men. We feel absolutely certain that none such do exist among any order of creatures higher than man, for if they do exist among men they are found among those possessing the least spiritual development and understanding. No being of any considerable degree of such development and understanding can entertain such a thought for an instant. This it is which leads us to assert that if any such claim is made anywhere in God's universe, it will be found among those of the human race who are sunken the deepest in spiritual ignorance. It is,

therefore, impossible that any creature possessing any other than the lowest degree of spiritual understanding should claim to comprehend that infinite standard which measures the infinite perfection of God. If, therefore, we cannot claim a comprehension of the infinite standard of perfection and cannot comprehend that infinite perfection which is measured by that standard, then we cannot claim an ability to attain unto such infinite perfection. If anyone does make such claim we have no words to address to him. Do we not then admit that we cannot become perfect as God is perfect? We admit this; we assert this to be truth. If it be truth, then it follows that there are at least two standards which measure perfection; one which measures the perfection of God, another which measures the perfection of the creature. In such admission lies the whole of our claim, to wit, that perfection is not an absolute state but a relative state.

Second. Perfection, then, being a variable state, depends upon growth, environment and the state of the existence of the creature. While it is true that we cannot comprehend that standard which measures the infinite perfection of God, it is true that we may comprehend the standard which measures human perfection. The latter standard is plain and simple, as is the revelation of God, in its essentials. If we were to formulate it in its simplicity and beauty, it would be in these words, Obey God, and do this through a love of obedience. Whatever creature really does this is perfect, whether such creature be human or superhuman. If the creature be human, such obedience is a very different thing from what it is if

the creature be superhuman. Among human beings themselves such obedience, when measured by that which the individual thinks, believes and does, varies as widely as do the thoughts, the beliefs and the acts of human beings. There is and there can be no standard of perfection, therefore, among creatures, which governs the thoughts, the beliefs and the acts of those who are perfect. Perfection can alone be measured by the purpose of the creature to obey, and by the fact that such obedience springs from the creature's love of obedience. This kind of perfection we may all claim, and many do claim. Of no other kind can we have any real knowledge.

Third. The foregoing being true, the perfection of the individual today may become imperfection tomorrow, without any change in that which he does. In other words, the individual may do today, and be perfect, that which he cannot do tomorrow and be perfect. If today he believes an act to be right, and in obedience to God, and he does it through a love of obedience, he is perfect. If tomorrow he does not believe the same act to be right and in obedience to God, and he does it, he is imperfect. It is unnecessary to enter into the causes which change men's beliefs. They are numerous and of varying power. Among them, however, the most powerful are, environment and the growth of spiritual understanding. These change the beliefs of men rapidly and positively. No two more powerful factors are given to those who pray and labor that the kingdom of God may come upon the earth.

Fourth. Perfection as thus defined and explained is the end of all who enter into spiritual life, whether it comes to them in their human or in their spiritual existence.

God finally spake to Job out of the whirlwind, that is, out of the tumult of an awakened spirit. The voice of God was the voice of his Spirit communing with the spiritual powers of his servant Job, after that Job had experienced that awakening and that submission of the soul typified by Elihu. Before such experience it was impossible that Job should have heard this voice of God, or that God should have thus declared himself to Job. Herein God reveals to man a great truth. It is, that the soul of man may be exalted through its own experiences into a state wherein it is possible for it to commune with its Creator as men commune face to face. Job's soul was thus exalted. To him this exaltation came through suffering, physical, mental, spiritual suffering, combined. For Job such suffering was a necessity in order that he attain such spiritual exaltation. Suffering is not always a necessity preceding such exaltation, neither does suffering always produce it. God leads one soul up this mount of transfiguration by one pathway; he leads another soul to the same spiritual height by an entirely different pathway. Transfiguration means spiritual exaltation in human existence. It meant that for Christ our Saviour; it means that to every soul whom God chooses to lead to such height. It is a mount no soul can ascend by its own will. It is a mount no soul can refuse to ascend, and live, when God commands it to ascend. Jesus

Christ ascended the mount of transfiguration in obedience to his Father's will, not for his own pleasure, his own good or for his own perfection, but solely to establish and leave a revelation of this truth to all men for all time to come. Christ was already spiritually perfect; he was already spiritually exalted; but his life must needs declare this truth to man, that such spiritual exaltation is possible for the soul of man in its human existence; not possible for those who seek it as did Peter and possibly James and John also, but possible for those whom God leads thereto by his own will and not by their will.

Into this state of spiritual exaltation Job was led through suffering. What, then, is this state which we have called spiritual exaltation? To answer this question we will propound another: What is spiritual existence? Having further answered this last as best we may, we will attempt to answer the former. In doing this we will consider it in the following order:

First. Spiritual existence is a normal existence.

Second. It is a present existence.

Third. It is an unending existence.

Fourth. It is limited to the human race alone.

Fifth. Christ could only enter it through physical life.

First. Spiritual existence is a part of the soul's existence from the hour of its creation and will continue so to be forever. In fact, after human death it becomes its sole existence. Are we now in spiritual existence? I answer this question unhesitatingly

in the affirmative, with the single qualification that at the present time our spiritual existence is associated with a physical existence. These two states of existence are distinctly separate. They are unlike in all except in one particular, which is, that they are alike in that which constitutes and declares them. Let us consider first what constitutes and declares our physical existence, and in this way approach the thought of what constitutes and declares our spiritual existence. Our physical existence consists of conscious experiences and of nothing else. There is nothing whatever in our physical existence, making up a part of our physical existence, or associated with it, which is not covered by the term conscious experiences. While it is not true that our physical knowledge is limited by our conscious experiences, yet it is true that our physical existence is so limited. There is a difference between physical existence and physical knowledge. The latter is based upon physical experience, but it need not necessarily be our own experience. Our physical existence is then the sum of our physical experiences. It is this and nothing more than this. If we have your concurrence in this assertion of truth, then you are prepared to accept the further assertion that our spiritual existence does now consist of and ever shall consist of, our spiritual experiences; that the sum of these experiences constitutes now, and ever shall constitute, our spiritual existence, and the whole of that existence. All physical experiences, constituting the whole of our physical existence, come to the soul through its five physical senses, or through such of them as remain to it if part

of them have been lost to it. In like manner all spiritual experiences constituting the whole of spiritual existence come to the soul through its spiritual senses or powers, or through such of them as remain to it, if part of them are lost to it. Normal physical existence is the aggregate of the experiences which come to the soul through the enjoyment and use of all of its physical senses and powers. Normal spiritual existence is the aggregate of the experiences which come to the soul through the enjoyment and use of all of its spiritual senses and powers. Physical existence may be contracted or narrowed by the loss of one or more of the five physical senses, and the consequent loss to the soul of such conscious experiences which could have come to it alone through such lost sense or senses. The soul's spiritual existence may in like manner be contracted or narrowed by the loss of one or more of its spiritual senses or powers, and the consequent loss to it of those conscious experiences which could have come to it alone through such lost senses or powers. In the foregoing we have limited our thoughts to the five physical senses, with which we have compared what we term spiritual senses or powers. We have used these expressions because in our present existence it is difficult for us to comprehend our own spiritual senses or powers. To illustrate: In physical existence the sub-sense or faculty of tune is dependent upon the sense of hearing and could not exist without that sense. So in our spiritual existence I am convinced there are many such sub-senses or faculties which are directly dependent upon a controlling spiritual sense. We are

therefore justified in asserting the belief, amounting almost to assurance, that in our spiritual existence there shall be developed and matured similar subsenses or faculties almost innumerable, which are wholly dependent upon what we call one well defined and definite spiritual sense, even as the faculty of tune, of rhythm, of time, the joy of melody, the exaltation of grandeur, the sweet influence of beauty, the inspirations which come to the soul from the earth and from the heavens, are all dependent upon the physical senses of hearing and of seeing. If all such pleasures of physical existence come to the soul through its physical senses, we may thereby be assured that still greater joys await the soul which retains all of its spiritual senses and powers unimpaired. We have elsewhere named the spiritual senses and powers which we can in some measure comprehend. We have also shown the effect of willful disobedience upon these senses or powers, subjects upon which we cannot enter in this connection.

The five physical senses have to do with what we call real existence, physical existence, matter, and the laws and phenomena dependent upon matter. The soul's spiritual senses cannot comprehend and know matter any more than its five physical senses can comprehend and know spirit. Therefore when the five physical senses perish and are lost to the soul through physical death, all real (that is, material,) existence ceases. The soul thereby loses all its power to know matter. Its existence thereafter is what would seem to us to be an unreal existence. It is an unreal existence in the proper sense of that term.

it is an existence into which nothing real can enter; no material form, no experience dependent upon matter or upon any material law. No conception of matter, other than that temporarily retained through memory, can come to the soul. It is a new life wherein the spiritual existence of earth has burst forth into the full fruition of the soul's spiritual nature and spiritual powers.

Second. This spiritual existence is a present existence. We are not required to wait until death shall have freed us from this material existence in order that we may have knowledge of the spiritual. It follows as a necessity that such knowledge must be limited during the material existence because this is the overshadowing, the paramount, the controlling existence while it continues. If this was not true the soul could not fulfill the purposes of its earthly life. It is then true that you and I now possess and may know and enjoy our spiritual existence. That this is true I certainly realize. If you do not it is because you are not living up to the full measure of your powers and your privileges. Lest this assertion be misconstrued, I must add that the spiritual powers which all should strive to develop are obedience and worship, these two bestowing all the spiritual knowledge which it is right for man in his human estate to know. To go beyond this is accompanied with risks I have warned against from the first I have written, risks which no man can avoid and which none can escape, except God lead him. When I have said this I have said the least that I dare say.

Third. This spiritual existence which we now live had its beginning with our creation, and that creation was associated with our human birth. We are born but once, we die but once. We possess continuing self-conscious existence extending from our human birth throughout an eternity to come, and such existence is spiritual. Our material existence is but the foundation upon which our spiritual existence rests, and without which it could not exist. Spirit is not material in any sense whatever, yet the spiritual could not exist without the material first existing. Why is this true? Because the spiritual is a reflex of the material, springing from the material, attaching to the material, being an effect of which the material is the cause. The nearest I can lead you to the thought that comes to me is by this illustration: Form and expression are attributes of matter. Neither could exist without matter, yet neither are material in themselves, in any sense, except that they are dependent upon matter.

All matter can be said to have form whether that form be visible or invisible to the human eye. This we can safely assert because experience and observation teach us that form is an attribute of matter and that matter cannot exist without form, either visible or invisible. The same can be said of expression. All visible matter carries with it some expression to a sensitive and appreciative soul taking cognizance of its form. Is there anyone who never saw an expression in a building, in a great rock, in a tree, in a landscape, in the ocean's wave and swell, in a flower, in a leaf, in a blade of grass? If there is

such an one, then for him I must use a plainer illustration. For you is there an expression in a statue, in a pictured likeness or image? If so, that is sufficient. The form of matter and the expression of matter, are the spirit of matter. The form of the creature and the expression of the intelligent soul given out through that form are the spirit of the creature. Is there, then, a spiritual existence for matter not animated by an intelligent soul? It is sufficient to answer that there is such an existence for all that is so animated. Bear in mind that I have used the form and the expression of matter, both animate and inanimate, both intelligent and non-intelligent, as an illustration solely, and that I have done this to lead the mind towards a comprehension of what spirit is. I do not claim that I have the power to comprehend the truth of the existence of spirit, except as a shadowy outline, but I do claim that the full comprehension of it lies in the direction I have indicated. Such existence as I have pointed out is everlasting. While it originated in matter and could not have existed without matter, yet it is not in itself material, and therefore may be and is everlasting.

Fourth. Spiritual life is limited to the human race alone because no creature below human is endowed with spiritual powers by and through which it may discern a spiritual existence. If such creatures did possess such powers then they would have such existence. This is the same as saying that such existence does continue for them, but to them it is oblivion because of the lack of powers to discern it.

There is a spiritual existence for the brute as certainly as that there is a spiritual existence for man, because the law upon which spiritual existence is based applies to all material existence. Nothing below man has the spiritual powers to discern its own spiritual existence. Inanimate matter is devoid of all power of discerning its own material existence, hence its existence can only be known to such orders of creatures as have the powers necessary to discern it. This may serve to illustrate the thought which we wish to give, which is this, that as inanimate matter now is to the brute creation so will the spiritual state of the brute creation be to the spiritual existence of the human being. It will be recognized as a truth, a fact, an existence; this and nothing more. There is no self-conscious spiritual existence for any brute creature, but there is a spiritual existence for every brute creature which the soul of man may discern and know as a truth and as a fact only. The same is true of every material substance whether animate or inanimate, of the form and expression of which the soul of man can now take cognizance. Lest I be misunderstood here let me express this truth in another form. The spiritual senses and powers of the human soul are powerless to take cognizance of anything which is material, hence to the soul after human death there can be no cognizable material existence, but there will be a cognizable spiritual existence dependent upon and springing out of such material existence. This latter is not material in any sense. It is the spirit of matter manifested to the spirit of the soul. If this is incomprehensible then it must end the

thought, for I have asserted from the beginning that the powers which are dependent upon and are allied with matter cannot comprehend the spiritual. I have carried the thought as it comes to me, in the direction of ultimate truth as we shall all experience it, just as far as I command language to do this.

Fifth. Spiritual existence as thus defined is absolutely dependent upon a material existence. The Son of God and Saviour of men could not have had a spiritual existence except he had first a material existence. God purposed that he should have both, and that purpose Christ fulfilled through human birth, human life and human death, and thus, and thus alone entered into the spiritual existence of the human soul. It is in this existence that we shall ever know him, not as we know God, but as we know each other. We shall know him also as we know God, but that is not as we know each other, for we can never know God thus.

Such is spiritual existence. What, then, is spiritual exaltation in human existence? Spiritual exaltation is a state of spiritual existence which normally belongs to untrammelled spiritual existence after death, but which God in his own wisdom and for the fulfillment of his own purposes sometimes bestows upon men yet in human existence. It is the ability to use a spiritual sense, prematurely developed. Such premature development is dependent, first and above all, upon the direct will of God. God does not develop this sense as a special or a direct gift or by use of arbitrary power, but only by the use of means which in themselves are the cause of such develop-

ment. That is to say, that the same means applied to any other soul would become the cause of the same effect upon that soul. We will inquire, then, what are the means used in producing such development? I do not claim to be able to comprehend or to name all the means that are thus used by God, but I do claim to comprehend something of some of them. Of those I can name the most important are heredity and environment and those appearing to me of less importance, human suffering, human relationships and human death. Under these five heads we will probably find all that we may know of the causes producing spiritual exaltation. We will take them up in their order.

Heredity is God's master workman in the building of the moral nature. To it all other influences are subservient. Heredity is the divine law of a divine selection, and by this law God fashions and shapes and endows the man for the emergency. Not in one generation nor in two is this done, but through an untold and unknown number of generations go down the traits of character and the developing powers until all converge upon and determine one human character, and that man is a man of destiny under God's will. He is the man for the emergency. He is the man whom God thrusts out to meet the emergency. He is the man who, resisting, is powerless to resist, and who accepting cannot fail. God has written this truth in the annals of the fading centuries of the past. He rewrites it in the annals of the passing centuries of undoubted history. He will continue to write it as long as men live and act in

human life. God governs, and the government of God contains no element of doubt, uncertainty or chance. Neither you nor I, nor all humanity combined, can vary by aught what is to be, as God has purposed it. What, then, are we? Automatons! We are and we are not. God's foreknowledge has made of us automatons; God's will has made of us free agents; but God's will in bestowing upon us free agency has reserved unto himself his own divine law of heredity and through this law he guides and bends the will of man into harmony with his own divine will and purpose.

My will is free, absolutely free, but my will is not the same as it would have been had existence come to me through another father and another mother, or through other grandfathers or other grandmothers, for my existence could not be separated from their existence. No other being was ever born on earth just like me, neither could I have been the same I now am had there been any variation whatever from that line of forebears down which my own individuality has come to me.

God's infinite purpose included my existence and my existence just as it is, with all the acts and thoughts and purposes which ever have been or ever can be a part thereof. This is as true of you as it is true of me. It is just as true of all that long line of ancestors whom God has used back to the very beginning of the race, in bestowing life and character upon us, as it is true of us. God's universe with all that it contains or ever can contain is nothing but an out-growth of God's infinite purpose whereby he called it

and us into existence and whereby we live and move and think and purpose and act and die and thereafter live again.

Environment is not much less powerful in the development of spiritual exaltation than is heredity. We have said that environment is of man's making. This is true in what we might term a secondary sense. Man can make and can change his own environment, but he can neither make nor change it so as to vary that environment from what God foreknew that it would be, therefore he is powerless to vary or to change the influences which God foreknew would be brought to bear upon him and upon others by reason of environment. The being whom God creates is destined to be subjected to certain influences springing from environment. Foreknowing these influences, the character of the individual is builded in infinite wisdom, by and through hereditary selection, to respond to such predetermined environment. When a character has been thus prepared for an environment and an environment has been predetermined for a character, there can be no uncertainty as to that which follows. The law of cause and effect then becomes operative in the development of character and in the production of thought, of purpose and of action. Like causes produce like effects under like and equal controlling influences. In every case infinite wisdom foreknows the causes, the controlling influences and the strength of such influences, therefore infinite wisdom knows what the thoughts, the purposes, the acts of every creature will be, before the thoughts, the purposes and the acts of the creature have an existence,

yea, before the creature himself has an existence. In this manner God forms the character to fit the environment which man creates by his own will and acts, and which God foreknew he would thus create. It is thus that our former assertion is sustained, that heredity and environment are the two most powerful influences which God uses in controlling his universe of created intelligent existence.

Human suffering in its relation to spiritual development has been treated so fully in preceding pages that we will not refer to it again in this connection.

Human relationships are different. We have not treated of them or of their influence upon spiritual development at length, and for that reason will now consider them. By human relationships we mean those of consanguinity and those of association. That which is applicable to one is not always applicable to the other. The influences of family ties and associations are not always the strongest and most potent in results. In fact we believe that they are rarely so. There is a sense of duty, a sense of honor, a sense of self respect towards existing society, which make family ties powerful incentives to action; but those relationships which are founded originally upon association but have their growth in and are perfected by congeniality of character are the most potent of the two classes. Sameness in hopes, fears and aspirations; in desires, purposes and actions, bind human lives together in bonds which eternity alone has power to sever. The influences springing from such united human lives are endless. Over these

influences eternity itself has no power. In the foregoing sentences I make the first reference to an unpleasant truth which has been apparent to me for a long period and which I am now loath to assert.

Human relationships, human associations, and the pleasures which spring from them, are of earth-life alone. They exist in earth as a necessity. They cease to exist when the earthly necessity for them ends. The influences which flow from them are unending, but the relationships themselves and the pleasures which flow from them end with human death. It is not a pleasant thought that those who are nearest and dearest to us now will be in spiritual existence no more to us than those who are now unknown. The human heart repels this truth and it is right that it should. The thought is not given to be accepted, and I would not have it accepted until it shall have been forced upon each by the acceptance of other truths which compel the acceptance of this one. It has been thus forced upon me, resisting all the while. Solitary and alone God exists in a unity which embraces all individuality. Solitary and alone the soul of man shall exist in a unity which is independent of all individuality. By this I mean to say that it is the destiny of the redeemed human soul to approach nearer unto, and to grow into, the solitariness of God's own existence as it grows into spiritual knowledge. The soul thus grows into a relationship towards all other intelligent creatures which shall ever approach in closer resemblance that relationship which God himself bears towards them. That relationship is one of equal and unvarying love towards all, equal

and unvarying interest in all, whether they be redeemed or be lost. As we grow into spiritual knowledge this truth will be forced upon us until its acceptance shall be complete. Human relationships are a necessity in human life and to them we owe much of what we are and shall forever owe much of what we shall be. Their influence is not only powerful in earth-life, but it is everlasting. Who of us does not now owe much of his soul's hopes and happiness or of his soul's doubts, fears and unhappiness, to such relationships? I for one can affirm that I owe all that now incites and inspires my spiritual being, to such relationships. The influences of them have saved me from spiritual death by pointing out to me the way of spiritual life.

We next take up the thought of human death and its influence upon spiritual exaltation. The thought of death is ever present with the human race. Whether its contemplation brings hope or terror, it leads to the thought of spiritual existence, of spiritual powers, of spiritual knowledge. Thoughts along these lines lead to desires and desires are followed by actions. It is thus that death aids spiritual development. Spiritual development leads to spiritual exaltation in those for whom God decreed it. Death itself is not the cause of spiritual development, whether such development comes before or after death has been experienced. It simply turns the thoughts towards such development and incites to that effort which is necessary for it. We have therefore nothing to say of death as a physical phenomenon. It is only as an incitement to a desire for

spiritual knowledge that we consider it. We long to know something of the life that our own loved ones live after that they have passed through death into the spiritual realm. This longing is followed by an effort to acquire such knowledge. Such effort is along one of two lines, either a study of God's written revelation and the truths contained therein, or a study of the physical phenomenon of death, and of such physical and spiritual phenomena as may follow it. That there are phenomena following death, and partaking of a physical and a spiritual nature need be neither asserted nor denied. Those who believe in them would not surrender that belief because of a denial of their existence, and those who disbelieve in such phenomena would not believe because of an assertion that they do exist. I will therefore neither assert nor deny that such phenomena exist. I have asserted, and I adhere to this assertion, that the physical phenomena which are said to have spiritual origin have no such origin. All physical phenomena exist because of and under physical laws, and these laws are not subject to the control of disembodied spirits. It is, however, true that spirit can act upon spirit whether one or both are within or without the body. Spirit within the body can take cognizance of physical laws, through its physical connection with such laws. It being true that spirit out of the body can influence spirit in the body, and that spirit in the body may take cognizance of physical laws through its physical connection with such laws, it thus becomes possible that in this indirect manner a disembodied spirit may use or may exert influence over

physical laws and physical phenomena. It is not really its own use or its own cognizance of such laws and of such phenomena but it is and must always be the embodied spirit's use and cognizance of them. My former assertion, therefore, stands unimpaired by this one. While all this is true, it is not all of the truth. The embodied spirit may be so influenced by the disembodied spirit that its eyes may be opened. By this expression I do not mean to say that it may see as disembodied spirits see, for disembodied spirits do not see at all, in our use of the term sight; but rather that a mental image is impressed upon the mind of the spirit still embodied, by the mind of the spirit disembodied. Such impression becomes to the soul impressed, a mental image as real to it as would be the same impression received from an actual physical existence. A real physical object simply produces a mental impression upon the soul while still embodied. Such impressions are made through the medium of the organs of vision. A similar impression may be made directly by another soul, not through the organs of sight, but despite them. The mental impression which we call sight or vision may therefore be produced in two ways: First, by the natural use of the organs of vision. It is, then, dependent upon a real object corresponding with the mental impression. Second, it may be produced by a second mind controlling the mind impressed. In this case it is not dependent upon the existence of any real or physical object corresponding with the mental impression; in fact no such real object exists. These are phenomena which are not unusual,

which are not disputed, and which have come under the observation of many of us. The impressed mind is said to be in a hypnotic, or in a semi-hypnotic state. This hypnotic or semi-hypnotic state may be induced by another or it may be self-induced, either consciously or unconsciously. All this is evidenced by the powers and the tricks of fakirs and jugglers as well as by the professional hypnotist. The unconscious hypnotic or semi-hypnotic state, whether self-induced or induced by another, is responsible for that class of phenomena which is largely attributed to the powers and the influence of disembodied spirits. It figures from the beginning to the end of the inspired record of miracles. I say this reverently and with full belief in the truth of these records in so far as that they express correctly the mental impressions made upon those who saw and heard. This thought cannot be enlarged upon here, inasmuch as it has been heretofore considered in part and will be made the subject of another paper.

From the foregoing I will assert that when the spiritual vision is opened, it means this: that the soul whose spiritual vision is opened is in a hypnotic state, either self-induced or induced by another soul, and that the inducing soul, when another, may be either within or without a human body. Spiritual exaltation is, therefore, a hypnotic state. When it is self-induced it is assumed to be natural, when it is induced by another soul, whether within or without a human body, it is assumed to be unnatural. These assumptions are only true in part. Self-induced hypnotism is not a natural function of any of the powers of

the soul. It is an acquired power, arising from unnatural, or rather extra natural, conditions. It is spiritual illumination when purely and properly acquired and directed. It is demoniacal power when improperly and impurely acquired and directed. It will certainly lead its possessor to one of these extremes. Death alone will reveal to man the mystery declared by the universal prevalence of demoniacal possession and the extreme rarity of spiritual exaltation. The explanation rests upon a spiritual law. The spiritual law exists because of a necessity for its existence. That necessity cannot be comprehended in earth, and hence cannot be accepted by any save by those who have attained unto spiritual exaltation, and by such it cannot be doubted. That necessity stands for all time between heaven and earth as an impassable gulf, and the failure to recognize and accept it, coupled with the exercise of the powers of the soul which I have described, bridges the gulf between earth and hell. That necessity, and the law which rests upon it, render it impossible for me to receive one thought from the soul of my own father or of my own mother, now in heavenly life, even as they were before they left the earth, or to give to them one thought from myself or from earth-life. The power exists in them as it does in me. The purpose to exert that power will never exist in either, for that purpose in either, with knowledge of that necessity and of that law, would be sin. While this is true, yet God's infinite purpose is above both that necessity and that law, and to whom he wills it, he applies that supreme and infinite purpose, not to the breaking of

the law, but to the overruling of the necessity. The conditions upon which alone this is done have been repeatedly referred to in these writings and will not be repeated. With this I have said all concerning spiritual exaltation which is given to me to say, all that is permitted to me to say, all that would be understood if declared. I have been forced to say this much in order to declare that state of spiritual exaltation into which Job was raised through physical, mental and spiritual suffering. The revelation of the Book of Job could not be declared and less than the foregoing be said, otherwise it never would have been written.

CHAPTER IX.

GOD'S PURPOSE IS INFINITE.—GOD IS IN ALL WE DO, IN ALL WE SEEK TO DO, AND IN ALL WE FAIL TO DO.—HE BESTOWS AND WITHHOLDS WITHOUT REGARD TO MORAL CHARACTER.—MAN IS CREATED AS LIFE BELOW HIM IS CREATED.—INERT MATTER IS CREATED BY SAME LAW.—THE SPIRITUAL IS ALL THAT IS SUPERIOR IN MAN.

The purpose of God is infinite ; it is changeless, and it is being fulfilled by us in our individual lives. The purpose of God is infinite. What does this mean ? It means that there is a purpose that governs all that occurs in all the universe ; that it is impossible that anything should occur in all the universe, that is not in accord with this purpose. This purpose is not limited to human life, human thought, human desires, human purposes, but it extends to all that manifests life below man, and to all intelligences superior to man. Extending downward, it includes and covers every instinctive act of every individual of every species wherein life is manifested even for an instant of time. Extending upwards it includes and covers every thought, every desire, and every purpose of every creature manifesting intelligent existence. We have been speaking of life governed by volition ; we now turn to life without volition. Such life down to

every blade of grass or to every leaf which springs into existence is included in this infinite purpose. Going one step lower, that inert matter which manifests no life had a beginning and is subject to constant change. The beginning or the formation of such matter and the changes therein which are as constant as are the changes in matter manifesting life, are each and all included in and covered by that infinite purpose, whether such changes be those made by the forces of natural law or those made by the will of man. All this multiplied by the unending existence of created intelligence, by the unending existence in oblivion of manifested life, and by the unending changes of created matter, carries us as far towards a comprehension of that infinite purpose as the mind of man has power to go. We can express these thoughts in words, we can follow the thoughts with our mental powers towards the conclusion which they declare, but we can never grasp that conclusion. It lies beyond the realm of human thought. It belongs to the infinite.

With the foregoing as the basis for our thoughts let us now consider what God himself said unto Job. It may be divided into the following subjects or lines of thought:

First. God is in all we do, in all we seek to do, and in all we fail to do.

Second. God bestows and withholds without regard to the moral character of the recipient.

Third. God creates man as he creates manifold life below man.

Fourth. God creates inert matter and governs it by the same law by which he creates and governs man, and manifested life below man.

Fifth. Man's spiritual nature is all that there is of man which is superior to the creatures below him, or superior to inanimate matter, and this superiority applies only to his existence after death.

First. We are God's creatures. We do his will; we do also our own will. These two assertions are not contradictory in the least degree. They are each absolutely true, and always must continue to be true. As we are powerless to go counter to God's purpose and will so are we free to do our own will and ever shall be thus free. All this rests upon our oft-repeated assertion that God by foreknowledge has himself purposed according as he foreknew we would ourselves purpose and act. It is thus that God governs his universe without one conflicting thought, purpose or act, on the part of any one of his creatures. When we have comprehended these truths then we are prepared to accept the assertion which constitutes the first subdivision of our present theme, to-wit, That God is in all we do, in all we seek to do, and in all we fail to do. This thought is not new, it is not hidden, and it is only strange to one who has failed to contemplate it. There cannot be two powers governing in God's universe. There is but one God and all power has its origin in his will. If any other source of power existed in his universe, then there could not be harmony therein. Two independent sources of original power existing in the universe is an impossibility, because an original source of power

can exist only in a God, and there is but one God. In other words, to possess or to constitute an original source of power is an attribute of Deity, and of Deity alone. No creature can possess such an attribute. All the power that any creature can exert is a bestowed power. A bestowed power can only be exerted subject to the conditions upon which it is bestowed. God bestows power upon his creatures with an absolute freedom to use it as they will to use it, but in bestowing it, God foreknows the uses they will make of it, down to every thought and purpose and word and act of the endless existence of the recipient. Therefore the source of all power is one infinite and eternal God to whom all other intelligent beings bear the relation of creatures, and from whom they have received all the power that they exercise, control or influence. God bestows powers upon his creatures and permits their use, but foreknowing the use that these creatures will make of these powers it becomes impossible for them to use these powers against or contrary to the purpose of God when he bestowed them. There is therefore no personal antagonistic power of evil warring against the infinite purpose of God. There is a power in all intelligent creatures to antagonize God by disobeying him and such power was bestowed upon them by God himself, according to the infinite purpose whereby they were created. God then creates and bestows a power which is used against himself and which he foreknew, at the time of its creation and bestowal, would be so used. This would appear to be an impossibility were it not the truth, known and accepted, that the everlasting hap-

piness of a creature can only be attained through the possession and control of such a power.

When we comprehend this truth, as some of us certainly do, then we may comprehend also how God mercifully and lovingly bestows upon his creatures this power to contend against and to antagonize himself.

Second. Such power is bestowed without regard to the manner in which it will be used, that is, without regard to the moral character which is to be developed by its recipient. The nature of the power thus bestowed is such that its use is absolutely free on the part of the recipient. The object of its bestowal can only be attained by and through such absolute freedom. The number who shall use such power in harmony with God's law is necessarily limited. This truth we have fully considered elsewhere. It therefore follows that the power of independent thought, desire, purpose and action is bestowed alike upon all, whether they shall use it in harmony with or against the law of God. It is precisely the same gift to each and all. When this truth has been accepted then we are prepared to accept the further truth that human prosperity and human adversity are wholly independent of human morality, unless the prosperity or the adversity be the direct effect of physical acts. The law of cause and effect is not varied by this truth, but subject to this law the moral character of the human creature is not an element which varies or enters into the prosperity, the adversity or the physical suffering of the individual. We may sin and be pros-

perous; we may sin and escape physical suffering; but in doing so we must not violate the universal law of cause and effect. We may refrain from all sin and suffer adversity; we may refrain from all sin and endure the extremes of physical suffering. In neither case would our moral character have anything to do with that which came to us, so long as we did not place ourselves under this one law. If it were not so, how could the consciously moral and upright bear their burden of adversity and suffering, and at the same time accept and believe the infinite love of the Father, and that infinite justice which is a part thereof? If it were not so, how could the consciously wicked and unjust ever be led to accept and believe in an infinitely just God? Their own experience would be a bar to such belief. Moral character is not of earth or of earthly life a part. It belongs to the spiritual nature of man alone, and its power is spiritual and spiritual alone. Man in his human life and in all that pertains to it is an animal, purely and solely; created by and under the same law which called lower animal life into existence, and subject to and governed by the same laws which govern such lower existence. Man's moral character attaches to and is a part of his spiritual nature, and belongs to this nature alone. It cannot govern, control or affect his human or animal nature save as it does so through the law of cause and effect. This law is universal in its application and builds up and accumulates, or tears down and scatters, for the lower orders of animal life, just the same as it does for the highest

order, man. The only difference is in the measure of its application, for while the animal, man, with his reason, applies it to meet his necessities according to the degree of his intelligence, so do the lower orders of animals, wherein reason has waned into instinct, apply it according to the degree of such instinct.

Third. These thoughts lead us to our third subdivision. God creates man as he creates manifested life below man. All life is a manifestation of God's life, therefore, all life is akin. To me this is not a repulsive thought. If to me my own conscious life and powers reveal the infinite life and powers of God, in whose image and likeness I am created, and if to me the manifested life of the lower orders reveals that same infinite life of God, then far from me be it to deny the kinship of my own life with their manifested life. It is the kinship of creation, not the kinship of generation, when that term is used in the sense of an agency. It is a kinship which must own the same infinite source of being, the same ultimate Father, the same infinite purpose, the same creative power, and a sameness in the one essential quality of life. This essential quality of life is its manifestation of God's own life to such of his intelligent creatures as seek to know him. There can be no other certain reason assigned why God in his infinite wisdom has created life. There can be no other reason required than this one, which covers all inquiries and satisfies all longings respecting it. Created life, then, whether it be the highest or the lowest manifes-

tation of it, is one and the same in essence and in kind. It varies only in character and in endowment. With this thought in mind, let us contemplate man in his relations to life above and to life below him. Man's life, spiritually, is kindred to all created life above him, and is subject to and is governed by the same laws, without exception, as is such life. This thought need not be followed further, as it is not within the limit of this argument. It is of kindred life below man's life that we speak. The range of manifested life from man's as the highest, down to the lowest physical manifestation of life, is that of which we now speak. It is this of which we assert that it is one and the same in essence and in kind. The laws which apply to one form or degree of this range of life apply equally to all forms and degrees of the same. This is true of the laws which govern its birth, the laws which govern its suffering, and the laws which govern its death. This whole range of life exists because of one and the same necessity for its existence. It ceases to exist as manifested life because of one and the same necessity that it should so cease, to wit, the physical form through which it is manifested. If, among the lower orders, we see revealed a law of life for such order, we may rest in the full assurance that that same law of life applies to all other orders within this range, in so far as it is applicable to their physical condition. Character alone is superior to such law of life, for the reason that character precedes any possible application of such law. Such law becomes effective only subject to

character which is bestowed with the gift of life. To illustrate such laws of life and their application to the human order of life, we mention that one which governs the increase and the decrease of the several orders of life. In the period of the world's existence no one order has been permitted to so increase as to overrun the earth, or to become extinct until the purpose of its creation had been fulfilled. These results are not of chance; they are of law. Whether the apparent cause has been the failure of food supply, the development of disease, or the introduction and growth of other antagonistic and destructive orders, the excess of every order has come to a hastened or untimely death. Has this been true of the human order? History declares the answer in unmistakable terms. Wars, pestilence, famine, death, as experienced by the human order, is but a duplication of that which comes to every lower order of animal life. Not only so, but they come by the same law and in fulfillment of the same infinite purpose. The means and the methods of depopulating the earth are as sure and as certain in their operation as are the methods of populating it, and will continue as long.

There is another law of life, stamped by nature upon every order of physically manifested life. It is given expression in the thought that the most highly developed and the strongest of each order survive for the longest time and in the greatest number the less highly developed and the weaker of the same order. This is revealed as a law of life to all who study life along the lines we have indi-

cated. Is this true of the human order? Again, history answers that this is true of man. The third illustration is not so plain to all, but we will express it thus: usurpation of power by one order or family over another order or family leads eventually to the destruction of the usurping order or family. The law of life which is revealed by this truth might be thus expressed: The undue multiplication or preponderance of any one order or family destroys the equilibrium of manifested life. Life was created in equilibrium and must return to equilibrium whenever that is destroyed. There is no exception to this law. There is an apparent exception. Whenever any order or family has fulfilled the purposes of its creation such order or family ceases to exist. It becomes extinct, and the truth of its existence is buried in the earth which nurtured and sustained it, or is lost to those for whom its existence is useless. This is true of races or families of man; it is true of orders and families below man. That which has fulfilled the purpose of its creation ceases to exist. This is the highest law of life, so plainly revealed that none can question it. Subject to this law, that other law, our third illustration, is universal in its application. Does the history of the human order sustain this law also? We assert that it does, and leave it to the thought of each to concur or to reject this truth. We therefore find that whenever any degree, order or family of manifested life, by its increase or by its destruction, destroys the equilibrium in which such life was created, there is reaction towards that equilib-

rium. Apply this law as you may, its truth becomes apparent throughout the ages.

In the destruction of human life and of the lower orders of life we find, then, one and the same law working, irrespective of the degree of life destroyed. Man is swept from the earth by the thousands, by the tens of thousands, by the hundreds of thousands, and no law of life under which man exists is violated. Dispensation of Providence and the inscrutable mystery of God's will are the satisfying solution whereby the great majority comfort themselves when these facts are contemplated. It were better to designate it thus: The laws of life under which man has his human existence call for depletion as surely as for multiplication of human life. Equilibrium must be maintained in the human order as surely as it is maintained in the lower orders of manifested life, and it as surely will be maintained. Equilibrium, thus used, means what? We would define it to be that number of individuals in any one order or family of manifested life which best fulfills the purpose for which such order or family was created. In the lower orders we can readily comprehend this as a truth. The undue multiplication of any one order (and sometimes of any one subdivision of an order) destroys the equilibrium of life and works an injury to all other forms of life. Illustrations of this truth in great number may be drawn from the ordinary animal and insect life with which we are familiar. When this same law is applied to man in his human existence it staggers us; we doubt it; we deny it; and there is nothing left

for us but this same dispensation of Providence and inscrutable mystery of God's will, of which we spoke. There is no dispensation of Providence outside of that dispensation which established the laws of life under which all created life exists. There are no inscrutable mysteries of God's will, save such as are expressed in these same laws. God's laws are changeless and everlasting. They strike me down and let you live, or let me live and strike you down, by that decree and purpose whereby they were established, and not by any subsequent act of the will of the infinite God. Nations are swept from the earth; peoples perish; races, even, become extinct; and it is all in accordance with that inexorable law under which life was bestowed upon them. One nation rises into power and demonstrates one phase of an ultimate universal civilization. It can do no more; it was built up by and along one line of thought, one ambition, one national purpose. In this it was strong, stronger than any other, and may be stronger than all others combined. In other respects it is weak; may be weaker than any other. In that wherein it is strong it becomes aggressive, dominant, masterful. It teaches to the world one lesson; it demonstrates its one truth, and it establishes forever its one principle, which thus becomes and shall forever remain a component part of the ultimate civilization towards which the human race progresses. Having done this, that nation has served the purpose of its creation. It decays, it perishes, and its completed work alone remains to reveal the infinite wisdom which decreed its existence. Are

we speaking now outside of the world's historic records? Let us see if we can read this law in anything that is past? One nation came into being whose composite thought seemed to hover about poetry, logic, rhetoric, sculpture and art in all their varied forms of expression; in fact that composite thought gave expression to perfection in art, and to the fullest development of the intellectual powers yet attained. That people gave to the world its lesson, never to be repeated, and passed out of existence. Another rose, developed and matured upon the single thought of power, political power, dominion, tyrannical supremacy of the few over the many. The world lay at its feet in conquered obedience. Its lesson had been taught, its work was finished; the truths, the illustrations, founded upon this thought and which are required for the ultimate civilization, had been bestowed by it, and it passed away. Other nations have grown up and matured, or are growing up and maturing, guided by a religious creed as a central and solidifying thought. They give expression to their creed; they teach the world the lessons of it; they illustrate its value or its harm, and all they are and all they do, by and through its influence and continuing illustration, will enter into and become a part of that ultimate civilization of which we speak. Another nation has come into existence, begotten of and sustained and nourished by the composite thought, belief and claim of individual liberty, individual rights, individual independence, as against all other human beings. Nourished and fat-tened by a desire and a purpose sweet to the taste

of every man of every race and nation and people, it has already grown to proportions approaching unwieldiness. It, too, is teaching its lesson; it is illustrating a truth and the workings and influences of that truth. Its work is not yet done, but its work surely will be finished, and then it, too, shall pass away: pass away as all other nations founded upon a distinctive thought and purpose have passed away, leaving to the world one of the profoundest lessons of all that shall enter into this ultimate perfected civilization, which lesson shall teach the farthest limit to which individual liberty, individual freedom, individual independence may be carried, and the point where these must be merged into the liberty, freedom and independence of society as a whole. This ultimate civilization shall become and be the outgrowth of all that shall have preceded it.

Fourth. God creates inert matter and governs it by the same law by which he creates and governs man and manifested life below man. In the material world there is one law for the living and for the dead; for that which is created to manifest life and for that which is created to sustain life. These two classes include everything that now exists, everything that has been created and everything that shall be created. To manifest life and thereby reveal the Creator to his intelligent creatures, as infinite in his attributes of power and wisdom, is the purpose of your existence and of my existence, as well as the purpose of all else that does exist. He who seeks beyond this for a reason for the creation of anything is doomed to disappointment. No other reason ex-

ists that can be known to man, because if any other reason did exist the perfect revelation of God to man would have included the revelation of it. Therefore, to manifest life or to sustain manifested life, covers all that we may know concerning the reasons for the creation of all things of which we have knowledge. What is, therefore, created to manifest life and what is created to sustain manifested life? This question is answered by that which we may see and may know concerning natural law. If we turn our thoughts to this subject we will immediately perceive the truth that many creatures both manifest life and also sustain other forms of manifested life. Therefore we will conclude that there is a law of life which might be thus expressed: To manifest life is but one of the conditions upon which life is bestowed; to surrender that life to perpetuate the manifestation of the same or of other forms of life is another condition of equal force. Among the lower orders this truth is so manifest that it needs no argument in declaring it. This law is most clearly revealed to man by its operations among the lower forms of life. If, however, we recognize and accept it as a law applicable to the lower orders, then we must accept and apply it equally to man. This we want to do. Man's life is bestowed upon these two conditions and they are of equal force when applied to him. If God's purpose concerning man, the perpetuation, the development, the civilization of his race, requires the sacrifice of one or of one million human lives they are taken, just as are taken the lives of the lower orders of creatures. This is

true of man's life in the aggregate and it is true of man's life in the individual. The law of life is the same in each case and for all. There is no death, either of a human being or of a creature lower than human, that is not according to God's will and purpose, and that is not required under the law by which the creature holds its life. In like manner, that which is created for the purpose of sustaining manifested life, continues or perishes by the same law, the law of necessity, according to the infinite purpose of God. We call this change death when it is applied to that which manifests life; we call it destruction when it is applied to that which is inanimate. In either case it is change, simply. Death is change in the same sense that the destruction of inanimate matter is change. It is in this broad, yet true, sense that man dies as the brute dies, and that the brute dies as inanimate matter is destroyed. One law alone governs all these results; the law of change, necessitated by the infinite purpose of God. By this law a world is brought into existence, endures for its period and passes away through change. It is not destroyed, it is changed. There is no destruction, either in that which is spirit or in that which is matter.

Fifth. Man's spiritual nature is all that there is of man which is superior to the creatures below him or superior to inanimate matter, and this superiority applies only to his existence after death. Death is the springing of the spiritual nature of man. It is not the flower. That must come by the development of that nature after death. Human

conditions and the material existence are incompatible with the development of the spiritual nature. It exists through these and in spite of them may make some growth, but such growth is not and cannot be so great as to controvert the declaration that death is really the springing of the spiritual in man and that the flowering of the spiritual nature lies far beyond the hour of a man's death. If this be true, then what is the ripened fruitage of a man's spiritual life? To answer this question as far as it is possible for us to answer it, is our purpose now. In doing this we must bear in mind that we all deal with that which lies far beyond our own experience, therefore, we can only reason by analogy from that which we have experienced up to that which it is possible for us to experience. If we know God now and know him by the exercise of powers of the possession of which we are self-conscious, and if we use these powers under a changeless law of the existence of which we are also conscious through our own experience, then we can safely assert that before us lies a continuous use of these same powers, under this same changeless law. In this manner we can safely anticipate that which we shall surely experience, although now wholly unable to experience it. In this manner we are enabled to declare something of that which lies before all who will steadfastly and untiringly seek to know and comprehend God's revealed truths through the normal use of these spiritual powers, with which they are endowed. What these powers are we have so fully declared elsewhere that we will not now repeat it. How they

are used and the effect of their use we have also fully considered. There remains, therefore, for this article nothing to be considered other than a forecast of the effects which will surely follow the use of these powers after that death shall have made such use the normal and highest function of the soul. The use of these powers in human life is a constrained use, an obstructed use, an unnatural use, if that word is properly understood. It is against the nature of the human being in his human life to use these powers, because the human nature is the dominating nature and the spiritual the subservient nature. It is in this sense alone that we use the term unnatural in the preceding declaration. All this is changed by death. The spiritual then becomes not only the dominant nature, but, also, after the lapse of a period, at least, the only nature of the soul. If these spiritual powers to which we have referred have not then been destroyed by the soul's own act, but remain to it with a desire to use them, their use then becomes natural, and a failure to use them unnatural. For the sake of clearness we must now repeat this much. The soul's spiritual powers of obedience and worship are destroyed, wholly destroyed, by any one act of the soul, which, in itself, is a purposed and wilful disobedience to God's law, and, once destroyed, these powers can never be restored to the soul. It is, therefore, only of those souls who have never purposely and knowingly and willingly chosen disobedience, that we now speak. All those who have, at any time, made such choice, have not within them any trace of the powers of which we speak

or any knowledge of what they are. Such cannot receive knowledge through them any more than the totally blind can see or the wholly deaf hear, in human life. All these, sooner or later, deny the existence of such powers. We find, therefore, that, after death, souls are divided into two classes. The one class retains in some rudimentary or embryotic state of development, these spiritual powers of obedience and worship; the other class is wholly lacking in them. The possession of these powers and the absence of these powers from the soul constitute that impassable gulf which separates heaven from hell. It is in very truth an impassable gulf, just as impassable as is that gulf in earth-life which separates the lovingly obedient and worshipful from the wilfully and purposely disobedient. It is neither more nor less than this same gulf, unchanged by death. All who retain these powers through death use them, for it then becomes just as natural to use them as it was unnatural to use them in their human existence. Those in whom these powers have been destroyed are not to be further considered in this connection.

CHAPTER X.

THE WAY OF THE SOUL IN LIFE EVERLASTING.

Before the obedient and worshipful soul lies the way which we propose to anticipate, as we may have the power to do so. That way will be marked by stages, by periods, by degrees. The better to guide our thoughts let us call them mile-stones along the way of the life everlasting. Human birth is the starting point of this way. Human death marks the end of the first stage, whether the period of it be a moment or a century of time. At death, therefore, we set up the first mile-stone and call it the beginning of the second stage of the way of life. The second mile-stone we will call Recognition, and it shall mark the period of the first distinctive change in the spiritual existence. The third mile-stone we shall call Illumination, spiritual illumination, which is the highest state of which mortals may have knowledge. The fourth mile-stone we shall call Comprehension, the power of comprehension. The fifth mile-stone we shall call Impartation, the power to impart knowledge comprehended. The sixth mile-stone we shall call Absorption, or oneness with God, according to the degree of life manifested by the creature.

That which lies between the beginning and death may be much or it may be little. In either case it

constitutes the first stage of our existence and is that upon which our spiritual existence depends.

Material existence is the foundation and the only support of spiritual existence. Without the former the latter cannot be. With the former, however brief the period of its duration, the latter cannot fail to be. The reason for this assertion belongs to another theme.

We refer to it here simply to emphasize our simile of death being the first milestone along the way of our unending life.

Second. Of this first stage we need say no more. Passing to the second stage we also pass the boundary of human experience, that is, of ordinary human experience. With this limitation in mind we are now to travel in thought over a new way, new in reality to us, yet not of necessity wholly new. We now deal with the spiritual nature of man and with that alone. Our thoughts are not now to be of man's human life or of his physical endowments; yet it is true that man's spiritual nature and his spiritual existence begin with his human birth, are associated with his physical nature and his physical existence, and continue as a part of a dual nature and a dual existence until death ends this dual state and leaves the spiritual as the sole existence. This spiritual existence and this spiritual nature are unchanged by death, so that if we comprehend what our spiritual nature and our spiritual existence are now, then we may surely know what they will be after death. For the purposes of this argument we

take these as axiomatic truths, and so use them. If this is error, then our argument falls. It is not error. I am fixed in my belief that death makes no change whatever in the spiritual nature or in the spiritual existence of the soul. If I have not heretofore shown this, or shall not hereafter show it by logical deductions from individual experiences, then the fault will be with the individual experience. No spiritual truth can be established by logical deduction, without experience. All spiritual truths must and forever will rest upon individual experience as their basic support. Logical deduction from this individual experience is an aid to their acceptance, when the experience in itself is not sufficient to force their acceptance upon the soul. Many spiritual truths are thus forced upon us. I will not say which of these methods has brought me to the unquestioning acceptance of these truths, which I here assert, and propose to use as axiomatic. It is sufficient that I have come into this knowledge.

Death, therefore, makes no change in our spiritual natures or in our spiritual existence. In these particulars we are the same one hour after death as we were one hour before death. We are unchanged in nature, we are unchanged in existence, save only that all that is physical, all that pertains to the physical, all that is dependent upon the physical, drops out of our existence and leaves us just as we were immediately preceding death, in all that is spiritual, in all that pertains to the spiritual, in all that is dependent upon the spiritual. If we are in the spiritual state of heaven in our physical ex-

istence, we will continue in that same spiritual state after death. If we are in the spiritual state of hell preceding death we will continue in that same spiritual state after death. Whatever we are before death, that we will be after death. While these assertions are literally and strictly true, they must not stand without some further explanation. Death does not change the spiritual state of the soul, but death may make any change in that spiritual state impossible thereafter. If the soul has chosen disobedience and passes through death into the spiritual state of the disobedient, such soul will be powerless to change that state thereafter. Such inability does not lie in the unwillingness of God to receive such soul into a state of obedience, but it does lie wholly in the inability of such soul to emerge from its state of disobedience. It has forever destroyed its own power to know God. It has no other or further evidence of God's existence than it had during its human existence. That evidence was insufficient for it then and it is doubly so now. Whether this was always true is not a question to be now answered. That it is true, since the fullness of God's revelation of himself through the human life and teachings of Christ, the Son, has been accomplished, we have the authority of the Son himself, for asserting. Jesus Christ has made this much clear by his teaching: First, that those who accept him, shall, through such acceptance, enter into spiritual life, which is the knowledge of the Father, and, second, that those who reject him shall thereby enter into spiritual death, which is an inability to know the Father, and,

third, that those who have not a knowledge of him sufficient to accept or reject him will not enter either of these spiritual states until they have had such knowledge and have made such choice. There is, therefore, a state of paradise, which is neither heaven nor hell, but is the state into which all souls are born and out of which they must pass, according to their own choice.

This, therefore, brings me to the following assertion concerning every soul which passes through death into the existence which is wholly spiritual. Its spiritual nature, its spiritual powers, and its spiritual state are unchanged by death. If it knows what its spiritual nature, its spiritual powers, and its spiritual state are before death, then it may certainly know what each and all of these will be after death. If it is ignorant of what these are before death then it will continue ignorant of what they are during the first stage of the way of its existence after death. If it has entered into the state of spiritual death before physical death, and is ignorant of this truth, as it always is, it will remain ignorant thereof after death. Those in the state of spiritual death know it not, and deny the existence of any spiritual state other than their own. This is true before physical death; it will continue true after physical death. When physical death comes it will add nothing to the knowledge which the soul already has of its own spiritual nature, its own spiritual powers and its own spiritual state. The spiritual remains unchanged, wholly unchanged by death. The spiritual in man lies above and beyond the

power of physical death to affect it. This plain truth, which becomes self-evident to us with matured thought, lies at the foundation of our understanding of our own spiritual natures. It is true that few ever understand their own spiritual natures during human life. They cannot accept this truth, or may be have never considered the possibility of the existence of this truth. Physical death to them is a mystery unsolved and unsolvable. It is to their thought a great catastrophe, a great cataclysm, rending and destroying all the conditions of life, and ushering in another world, with other conditions wholly unknown. With such views of death no man can ever comprehend his own spiritual self. To say that death will bring no changes to us is a self-evident absurdity, but to say that it will bring no changes to our spiritual selves, is or becomes a self-evident truth to those who comprehend themselves spiritually. This being true, we will awaken from the sleep of death, the transition sleep through which we must all pass, and which Christ, the Son of God, himself could not escape, because of the human nature which he had assumed, unchanged in all that is spiritual within and about us, and unconscious of any change save that which pertains to our physical life. We shall know no more of our spiritual selves than we knew when we entered this sleep of death. We shall see or comprehend no more clearly what we are spiritually or what our spiritual state is. Deprived of all the senses, powers and faculties which are dependent upon the physical existence for their use, we turn to our spiritual selves as being the *all* of

us, and thus begin forthwith to comprehend ourselves more fully as spiritual beings. This leads to the development of those spiritual powers which have lain dormant during human life. Our development as spiritual being is thus accelerated. As the soul's physical senses, faculties and powers come into use and are developed through infancy and childhood up to matured life, so now, in like manner, the soul's spiritual senses, powers and faculties must come into use and be developed, even as through a spiritual infancy and childhood. However, this spiritual infancy and childhood need not necessarily be delayed until after physical death. It may come in a measure greater or less before such death; and it does so come to every soul which makes the effort required for its spiritual development. We have thus tried to present, in language plain and unmistakable, a vital thought which must be accepted in order that that which follows may be accepted.

The soul passes through death and awakens from its sleep of death. As it is with one, so is it with all. That is, all human creatures cast off the physical state in the same manner. The unconscious state is itself a variable period, depending upon the individual life preceding death. The greater the spiritual development and the more natural and harmonious the human development in all its phases, the briefer is the period of unconscious spiritual existence. The human life and human development of Christ were perfect. His spiritual nature, the outgrowth and expression of that human life, was also perfect. Christ remained in this transition period

of spiritual unconsciousness for a period approaching three days, or consuming parts of three days, and thus became the first, the earliest, the quickest fruits of the resurrection of a human creature out of its transition sleep. No human soul can emerge from this transition sleep in any briefer period. How much longer the period may be for others is not given us to know. We only have the revelation, and through it the knowledge, that those who develop their spiritual natures in human life through obedience and worship have the first, the earliest, the quickest resurrection from this state as compared with those who do not so develop their spiritual natures. Resurrection means an awakening into consciousness from the sleep of death. The sleep of death means a period of unconscious spiritual existence immediately following the casting off of the physical existence. The duration of such period is not great, at least there is no revelation which teaches us that it is. The limit of the shortness of its duration has been fixed by the perfect life, human and divine, of the Son of God, and the manifestation which he made of himself, through his spiritual resurrection, to his disciples. The opposite extreme of the duration of this period would be represented by that which is required for a human soul possessing the lowest possible spiritual development to become conscious of its spiritual powers after that it had been wholly cut off from all knowledge dependent upon those senses, faculties and powers which can only act in conjunction with a material existence. We can conceive that human souls have lived

and do now live, in whom, at death, there exists nothing beyond a mere trace, or an embryotic state, of all spiritual powers, and of the existence of which the soul is wholly unconscious. In such cases this sleep of death, this period of unconscious spiritual existence, can only be likened to the period of physical gestation. Sooner or later every soul awakens from this unconscious state by a self-consciousness of knowledge brought to it through some one of its spiritual senses, powers or faculties. Such knowledge in the world of spirit must be an individual experience. Nothing else to it is knowledge; nothing else can be knowledge. It can know that it lives only through an individual experience. This comes without surprise or wonder to those who have developed and used their spiritual powers during human life, and have received spiritual knowledge through them. Such individual experience, in every case, whether it comes quickly or whether it be long delayed, is the first consciousness of existence after physical death. Having thus awakened, development thereafter depends upon individual effort. If that is lacking, no development will follow. If the soul obeyed and worshiped God in its human life, it will obey and worship him from the instant of its conscious awakening. If it did not obey and worship God in its human life, having knowledge requisite therefor, but chose rather to disobey him and do its own will, it is powerless now to obey, to worship or to know God, because in it the spiritual powers of obedience and worship have been destroyed by its own act. It is for this reason that there can be no change in the

soul's spiritual state after spiritual death, whether that occur before or after physical death. If in its human life the soul did not have knowledge sufficient to enable it to obey and worship, then it was equally impossible for it to choose disobedience, and that soul remains in the same spiritual state into which it entered with the beginning of its existence. It will continue in the same state until it possesses such knowledge, and, having it, makes such choice. Physical death changes not the state of any soul, whatever that state may be. Whenever knowledge sufficient therefor is possessed in human life, the choice of the soul between obedience and worship, or disobedience and the doing of its own will, is therein made, and the spiritual state of such soul is fixed thereby.

Growth in spiritual knowledge after death may be very slow and it may be very rapid. When no knowledge sufficient for choice exists in human life, and no spiritual development exists therein, it is with great difficulty that the soul can be aroused to effort. There is no fear of death before it; no uncertainty as to its future existence; no incentives such as bear upon all souls yet in human life, to act upon it; hence it is harder, much harder, for such soul to come into obedience and worship, through its own volition, as it must come, if at all. This is what we mean and all we mean in all these writings when we have referred to the greater difficulty of obedience and worship on the part of a soul in the state of paradise, after physical death, as compared with a soul in the same state before physical death. It is true that infinite justice is meted out to all souls,

whether physical death intervenes or not; but this truth does not conflict with the assertions which we have heretofore made and the use to which we have aimed to put them. It is the duty of every Christian to strive to bring this sufficient knowledge to every human soul before physical death shall remove it from the influences which are powerful during its earth-life in determining its choice.

Whether the period be short or be protracted there comes to every soul which passes through physical death in the spiritual state of spiritual life, or which, after physical death, passes out of the spiritual state of paradise into spiritual life, a period at which it recognizes, accepts and makes its own this essential spiritual truth, to wit: The God I worship is known to me as he only can be known to any creature, through my own spiritual powers of worship and obedience. I know him by and through my own experiences, which come to me as the effect of my own worship and obedience, and this is all I ever can know of God. God manifests his own existence to me by and through these personal experiences of my own, by and through his infinitely perfect work of creation, and by and through the human and spiritual life and the teachings of Jesus Christ, his Son. Christ is with me in spirit, and will be always, without end. God's Holy Spirit speaks with me through my own spiritual nature and powers, and ever shall so speak with those who seek his presence. With this revelation of God's infinite power, through his creation; with this revelation of God's infinite wisdom, through his Holy Spirit, and

with this revelation of God's infinite love, through Jesus Christ, his Son, I am satisfied, *satisfied*, SATISFIED. In this satisfaction I am wholly happy and will ever worship and obey my God, who, being invisible, is thus clearly seen by me. At this point on our way of life we set up its second mile-stone, marking the end of its second stage.

Third. From this point we enter upon the third stage, that of which the end is spiritual illumination. Of this stage only do I hesitate to speak. It involves so much which might appear to be personal claims that I must deny and dispel such claims even before the thought of them arises. I make no claim to spiritual illumination, in the sense in which I now treat it. Claims, as well as disclaimers, are alike worthless. The truth that is spoken and the thought which is recorded are the only support upon which any such claim or any such disclaimer can rest. The spirit which is breathed through the spoken or the written words is the sole proof of claims to spiritual understanding.

Recognition, as we have just defined it, is the foundation of, and is, in itself, the beginning of spiritual illumination. The latter cannot come without the former, yet it does not necessarily follow close upon the former. The soul may recognize the essential truths we have outlined and rest content therein. Such is the will of many, but it will not always be their will. The soul of man, endowed with a likeness to the powers of God, cannot always rest satisfied with spiritual recognition alone. The existence of such powers becomes a self-conscious truth.

The desire to use all self-conscious powers is bestowed as a part of the power itself, upon all creatures. Such desire ends in purpose and the purpose begets action. It is action, use, that develops the powers. Spiritual illumination is just as impossible without individual effort as would be the attainment of the highest physical knowledge without such effort. It cannot be imparted; it must be imbibed; it must come as a growth, a development. It is the effect, of which personal effort, under individual instruction, is the cause. This is not saying that personal effort alone, without individual instruction, could not produce spiritual illumination, for it is certainly true that the soul could thus grow into it, but such growth would resemble in slowness the growth of physical sciences under like conditions. The soul of man is not left to itself alone in its struggle to solve the infinite mysteries and truths of its own and of its Creator's existence. It is aided to the limit of its ability to comprehend. Its ability to comprehend is an ever-increasing power, and the measure of such increase is the measure of the soul's individual effort. If you can accept this truth of the growth of a soul in spiritual understanding, and likewise earnestly desire such growth you will thereby be led into that effort which certainly begets such growth. Can this occur in human life? We unhesitatingly answer, that, while the conditions and the environment are unfavorable therefor in human life, yet they do not render it impossible. Spiritual existence is our existence now. It is true that it is associated with the physical existence in our human life and

is the subjective existence while thus associated, yet it is also true that these relations may be largely modified by temperament, physical organization, desires, purposes, and the development of the soul's spiritual powers, as well as by environment and special conditions, of which we will not speak more freely. God works with and upon all his creatures, but he does not work with and upon all of them alike. He creates life, he endows life, he takes life from its human state, according to his own will and for his own purposes. This will and these purposes we cannot question and may not always know. If each creature will but follow faithfully the revelations of God's Holy Spirit to him and make the individual effort required therefor, the end will be the same, sooner or later. God's revelation is not the same to all. It can scarcely be said to be the same to any two human beings. Revelation is the office and work of the Holy Spirit. To one the Spirit sayeth one thing, to another the Spirit sayeth another thing. In each case the word is that which is most helpful to the soul to be influenced and led. The word is suited to the knowledge which the soul possesses, to the prejudices which must be combatted and corrected and to the human environment in which its earthly lot is cast. A failure to recognize this truth is one of the stumbling blocks which lie in the way of him who would teach spiritual truths to human souls. The measure of the revelation which has been given to one may not be the measure of the revelation which has been given to his neighbor. That which would be sin for one may not be sin for

another, possessing a different revelation of spiritual truth. Sin lies not in the act, it lies in the purpose which precedes the act. Holy is he who longs for holiness, who purposed holiness and who acts according to the revelation God's Holy Spirit has given unto him. Unholy is he who cares not for holiness, who does not purpose holiness, and who violates the revelation which God's Holy Spirit has given to him. This is true, whatever the acts of the one or of the other may be. There is but one revelation, but that revelation is infinite as are the attributes of God, and can never be wholly understood. We understand it according to our spiritual development and knowledge. It meant one thing to us yesterday: it means another thing to us today. The meaning today does not contradict the meaning of yesterday; it is only deeper and broader. Yesterday, to ourselves, the meaning of today would have appeared to us as a contradiction to the meaning of yesterday. This is always true. Our present understanding always appears to ourselves as a contradiction of any broader or deeper understanding than our own. The reverse of this is never true. We look back over the steps or stages of our progress up to our present understanding and we see neither conflict nor contradiction. We cannot look forward even one step or stage without seeing both. We must ourselves advance before we can receive and accept revelation as it comes to one in advance of ourselves. We must grow and believe; we cannot believe and grow. Spiritual growth is, therefore, the condition upon which alone depends our increased knowledge of God's revelation.

Is spiritual growth possible in human life? It is not only possible, but it is required of us. If we meet this requirement and grow spiritually we cannot escape, nor hinder, nor lessen this change in our understanding of God's revelation. It comes to us as certainly as comes the growth. There is a difference between spiritual devotion and spiritual growth. A soul may be devoted to the very limit of devotion and make no growth. To it there would come no change in its understanding of revelation. The thoughts and the beliefs of its childhood would be the thoughts and the beliefs of its manhood, and these, again, the thoughts and the beliefs of its latest years, its devotion remaining constant from youth to old age. Thus devotion may exist without growth. Growth, however, cannot come without devotion, for devotion is one of the conditions of growth. Other conditions being absent, devotion cannot produce growth. We will then inquire: What are the conditions of spiritual growth, either in this life or in the life to come? We answer the inquiry thus: Spiritual growth comes from the earnest efforts of the soul in pursuit of spiritual knowledge; and the conditions of such growth are absolute and unhesitating obedience springing from a love of obedience, and the highest worship which the soul is capable of rendering to its Creator. Without these and all of these combined, growth in spiritual knowledge is not possible. We will consider them briefly.

The effort required is an effort to learn, founded upon a desire and a purpose to know all that it is possible to know concerning spiritual truths. Such

effort is wholly mental. The soul can live superior to its physical conditions. It can live in its spiritual conditions while yet in physical environment. It can use its spiritual powers one and all and thus develop them. It can in this manner, in a large measure, free its spiritual existence from the dominating influences of its physical life, and can almost make its spiritual the paramount and controlling existence. Couple such life with the conditions named, absolute and unhesitating obedience springing from a love of obedience, and the highest worship which the soul is capable of rendering to its Creator, and we secure the growth in spiritual knowledge which we seek. The effort required needs no further explanation. The obedience required should need no explanation, because all obedience should be founded upon a love of obedience. There are, however, sometimes other motives which lead to actual obedience, but which render such obedience unavailing as a means of spiritual growth. Of worship we can say but little. Its outward forms are as various as are the degrees of spiritual growth and understanding. All are right and proper and beneficial in their place, for those to whom they give pleasure. True worship is of the redeemed soul a part; an exaltation towards the life of God; a conscious inbreathing of the divine existence; the conscious knowledge that the love which the soul sends forth to its Creator is lost in the infinite love with which the everlasting Father follows the child. Worship, true spiritual worship, is above song, and above prayer; it is above form and above ceremony; it is above appointed place and

time; it is of the soul's life a part; it is a conscious use of a spiritual power which God bestows upon the soul. Worship such as this, I know and you may know if it is not now your experience. Through such stages and along such way the soul must pass up to this third mile-stone of the way of everlasting spiritual life, that of spiritual exaltation. When it shall have reached this stage then it shall be prepared to enter into that higher life with God, of which mortals can know nothing. Of it we can speak only in conjecture.

Fourth. After spiritual illumination comes spiritual comprehension. This is a stage upon the journey of life which we may know as possible for all those who persevere and progress in the attainment of spiritual knowledge. What it will be we cannot assert, for it is certain that no being wholly human ever has experienced it in human life. Christ, through his divine nature, possessed spiritual comprehension, but Christ could only teach it through symbol and metaphor. It is impossible to express a spiritual truth by thoughts which are above the plane of the existence of him who seeks that truth. It can only be declared to such intelligence by symbol and metaphor. Who can comprehend God's existence but God himself? In childhood we begin to learn of this truth through the symbol and metaphor of God as a Good Man, the God-Man. A little later the symbol and metaphor change to God as a King, the King of Kings, clothed with majesty and power. Later comes the change to God, the Being, who was and is and shall forever be; the Eternal, the Ever-

lasting One. When we have comprehended this thought we have progressed in our comprehension of this spiritual truth beyond our first comprehension of it, which was of God, the Good Man. This advancee is but a trifle when compared with that everlasting progression which must come if we fulfill the destiny of God's elect, which destiny is endless search after spiritual knowledge and endless progression in spiritual comprehension. There is a point along the way of our spiritual life at which we shall set up this fourth mile-stone, marking the fourth stage of that existence. It will be when our spiritual development, our spiritual understanding, shall have reached the full measure of the capabilities of the spiritual powers bestowed upon that order of intelligent existence which we call human in its earthly or chrysalistic state. What that degree of development is we may not now know, simply because we cannot now comprehend it. We do, however, know that the spiritual powers bestowed upon us are not infinite. If not infinite, then they are limited. If limited, then of necessity there shall come a period at which they shall have reached a state of full development, and at that point is set up this fourth imaginary mile-stone marking the stages of progress from human birth through an endless existence. This much is a logical deduction from what we have experienced and do now know, and of it we may feel assured.

Fifth. After spiritual comprehension comes the power to impart the knowledge comprehended. Impartation of spiritual knowledge can only follow comprehension of spiritual knowledge. Impartation

cannot go before comprehension. Therefore all the spiritual knowledge which Christ imparted, he himself first comprehended. No other spiritual teacher who has ever existed among men has been able to impart spiritual knowledge in its completeness because no other one has comprehended it in its fullness. Impartation of spiritual knowledge is a power which Christ possessed by reason of the perfection of his divine attributes; but impartation is always limited by the powers of him to whom it is sought to impart knowledge. Hence Christ was forced to use symbols and metaphors, parables and illustrations more or less hidden, in order to reach the understanding of his hearers. As it was with Christ so is it with all revelation of spiritual truth in all time and by all methods of revealing it. All revelation, of all time, of all methods of expression, of all degrees and of all forms of expression, constitutes one single and perfect work. The understanding of that revelation in its entirety, through unceasing effort, is the destiny of the souls of the saved, from their birth into human life to this period of full comprehension of which we write. Thereafter impartation is their work and their destiny.

Sixth. Impartation cannot last throughout an endless existence, for otherwise it would imply endless creation or absence of progression, both of which thoughts are antagonized by the revelation of spiritual truth which has been given to us. Accepting these thoughts as truth, there must of necessity follow one more stage in the way of the life of the redeemed soul. It is that which we call absorption,

or oneness with God according to the degree of life manifested by the creature.

Absorption is the last stage of the way of the life of the human soul. What is absorption? We may know only from what is revealed or rather from what we understand of that which is revealed, and from what necessarily follows because of that which we understand. Absorption is neither the death of the soul's life nor the annihilation of the soul's individuality, but it is the reunion of both with the uncreated life of God from which they came. God the Father receives back the child in a sense which we cannot now know. It is a state of oneness with God just as was and is the life and the individuality of Jesus Christ in a state of oneness with the eternal life of the Father. It is the life, the words, the truth, of Jesus Christ which reveals to the soul of man this its ultimate destiny. Christ was and is from God, was and is of God, was and is a part of, an expression of, God's own existence. As such he was one with God, absorbed in God. This is not true of Christ when we speak of him as a human being for he possessed and manifested a human individuality. Neither is it true of Christ when we speak of him as a spirit, for he possesses and manifests to such as can receive the manifestation, a spiritual individuality. It is true of Christ when we speak of him as a Being, not a soul, but a Being above a soul. When we speak of the human race we call the individual, the ego, the soul, that is the self-conscious self, endowed with and manifesting human life.

When we speak of Christ, we speak of a Being, not of a soul, yet self-conscious in his own existence as is the soul, endowed with and manifesting the life of the Son, the same being one with the life of the Father. It is into such unity of life without the loss of the individuality of existence, that the redeemed soul of man shall enter when it shall reach that state of absorption or oneness with God which awaits it, there to abide forever.

That life which is below that degree of intelligence which may know its Creator, is absorbed into the life of its Creator when it ceases to manifest itself through its physical existence. This is true because such life is powerless to manifest itself through any other existence, being unendowed with spiritual powers. For such life physical death is simply oblivion, rest, inactivity, unconscious unmanifested existence, not annihilation. For the soul of man which is endowed with spiritual powers through which it may know its Creator there is a higher destiny. It is that through which we have sought to lead you in thought. Its end will not be unlike the end of that lower life of which I speak save that with the higher the self-consciousness of individual life and peace and joy can never be lost. In that oneness with God for which we hope and pray and into which all who are faithful to the revelation which God has given, will most surely enter, we will find the fullness of that spiritual joy and peace and purity and love, of which to us the earthly life of the Son of God was the revelation. Such is the highest, the ultimate heaven of the redeemed soul.

After that God had spoken to Job his soul was spiritually illuminated, that is, he received and accepted spiritual truth when it was declared unto him. Into a knowledge of such truth he grew rapidly throughout all the remainder of his earthly existence. This is the privilege of all who attain unto the state into which Job then entered. When Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar had been reproved by God they repented and by the assistance of Job accepted the truths which they had before misunderstood and misrepresented. As it was in the days of Job so is it in the days in which we live. Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar reappear in every land and upon every hand to comfort and assist the struggling soul which is seeking spiritual knowledge, and with the best of purposes they do this by a reiteration of their own understanding of revealed spiritual truths. They are unable to comfort because their conception of spiritual truth is not such as will bring comfort. If God speaks to us in a way which makes understanding easier and the truth plainer, let us listen to the voice, whether it be the voice of angel, of spirit, or of mortal, or whether it be the voice of God's Holy Spirit to our own soul direct. God leads the souls of men and speaks his truth to them by ways that are not of our choosing. Whether that voice comes to us through the silence of death, bringing treasures of thought from the great source and fountain of all thought, down, down, down, step by step, step by step, step by step, through every order and degree of intelligence, to this our lowest order and degree, transforming the expression of such thoughts

through every order and every degree, down to that simplicity of expression, wherein man can alone receive them, let us listen to the voice for it is the voice of God.

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